

Always memorize your last few lines so you don't have to look down at your notes. This is the time to deliver straight to them: eye to eye, person to person.

Use a parable, a fable, a quote, a saying, or something from everyone's experience. Quotes from "my father", "grandmother", "favorite teacher" are especially effective, adding basic folk wisdom to a personal note and giving an image of you as a family member or a kid—basically one of them. Try to leave them with a thought that will continue to provide an echo after you stop.

Pace Your Leaving

Don't leave too hastily, bolting off the stage or looking around for the exit. Standing still, with eye contact, lets the audience think about your speech or last lines for a moment. It should feel like you're both thinking it over, reluctant to part and break the mood. Then, fold your notes, calmly, and walk away.

Now let's turn the spotlight on *you*, the speaker. The star of the moment. What can you, personally, do to make yourself a more interesting and memorable speaker? I can see the beads of perspiration break out as I write, "The spotlight's on *you*." I hear that inner voice within you say, "Now *that's* the real key! That's where we lose 'em!" Guess we got to this topic just in time . . .

PERSONAL STYLE

Being Yourself

I started working with the CEO of a major corporation whose staff called me in because of his poor communications skills.

Met in person he was charming—bright, warm, with an easy, bantering manner. I couldn't see what the staff was talking about. Then I asked him to re-deliver a speech to me that he'd given the previous week. From Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde!

What I saw was an empty suit of clothes: a dry, serious, monotone-voiced puppet going through the motions of making a speech. When I replayed the videotape we made, his response was, "Look at him. He's so boring and stiff! I can't stand him." What was going on? How did such a "split personality" develop?