

What does this kind of opening accomplish?

- It sets you among them, not apart. By predicting what they're thinking, you tell them that you've been there, too. Like them, you've also anticipated boredom and wished you were somewhere else. "Hmm, sounds like a pretty regular sort," thinks your audience.
- It has warmth and humor. Demonstrating that you not only have that but are very willing to show it before a large group is another surprise and brings you closer to your audience. The wry touch of humor, the relaxed manner says to them: "This speech is going to be a little different; not stuffy or formal. It'll deal with the truth and it'll be on my wavelength. Probably enjoyable, too. "
- It shows that you care about them enough to even spend time imagining them as you prepared your speech. This bodes well for the substance of your speech. "It'll probably be about something / care about, not only what the speaker cares about. "
- It suggests you're a pretty secure person. To dare to say at the outset that they probably think you might be boring is to get a laugh and a doff of the cap. People don't often make fun of themselves, especially in public.

Telling a surprising, human kind of truth as an opener is one of the strongest beginnings. But, it's not for everyone! Some of us feel very comfortable being personally revealing like that. Others, because of background and conditioning, may feel very uncomfortable talking like that. If your father was very formal and never loosened his tie at the dinner table, it may be kind of hard for you to present an informal image that will also make you feel professional.

Other Possible Openings

Be true to yourself. Find an opening that feels comfortable, now that you know what it needs to do.

- *Shared experiences*
You can begin by telling them about an experience you both share:
"Like you, I work in steel. I've been at this plant as long as some of you, maybe longer than most, but not as long as Joe Brown over there."
This kind of "leveling" approach moves you in among them and also gives you the opportunity to toss a personal, friendly greeting to one of their own. Audiences always feel they share in kudos for one of their own