

## Methods of Persuasion Lecture

### I. Methods of persuasion.

A. People have been studying the strategies and tactics of successful persuasion for thousands of years.

B. Scholars generally agree that listeners are persuaded by a speaker for one or more of four reasons.

1. Because they perceive the speaker as having high credibility.
2. Because they are won over by a speaker's evidence.
3. Because they are convinced by the speaker's reasoning.
4. Because their emotions are touched by the speaker's ideas or language.

### II. A speaker's credibility plays an important role in persuading the audience.

A. Credibility is the audience's attitude toward or perception of the speaker.

1. The more favorably listeners view a speaker, the more likely they are to accept what the speaker says.
2. A speaker's credibility will vary from audience to audience and topic to topic.

B. A speaker's credibility is affected by two primary factors-competence and character.

1. Competence refers to how an audience regards a speaker's intelligence, expertise, and knowledge of the subject.

2. Character refers to how and audience regards a speaker's sincerity, trustworthiness, and concern for the well-being of the audience.

C. There are three types of credibility.

1. Initial credibility is the audience's perception of the speaker before the speech begins.
2. Derived credibility is produced by everything a speaker says and does during the speech.
3. Terminal credibility is the audience's perception of the speaker at the end of the speech.

D. There are three strategies speakers can use to enhance their credibility.

1. Speakers can enhance their credibility by explaining their competence.
  - a. They can stress their research on the speech topic.
  - b. They can stress special knowledge of the topic gained through personal experience.
2. Speakers can enhance their credibility by establishing common ground with the audience.
  - a. Establishing common ground means showing respect for and identifying with the audience's values and beliefs.
  - b. Establishing common ground is especially important in the introduction of a persuasive speech.
3. Speakers can enhance their credibility by delivering their speeches fluently, expressively, and with conviction.

- a. There is substantial research showing that fluent, animated delivery greatly enhances a speaker's credibility.
- b. Speaking with genuine conviction also does a great deal to strengthen a speaker's credibility.

III. A speaker's use of evidence plays an important role in persuading the audience.

A. Evidence consists of examples, statistics, and testimony used to prove or disprove something.

B. To be persuasive, speakers must support their views with evidence.

- 1. Careful listeners are skeptical of unsupported claims and generalizations.
- 2. Strong evidence is particularly important when the speaker is not recognized as an expert on the speech topic.
- 3. Strong evidence is also crucial when the target audience opposes the speaker's point of view.

C. There are three tips persuasive speakers should follow to use evidence effectively.

- 1. Persuasive speakers should use specific evidence.
  - a. Research indicates that evidence is more persuasive when it is stated in specific rather than general terms.
  - b. Specific evidence also enhances a speaker's credibility by demonstrating his or her grasp of the topic.
- 2. Persuasive speakers should use novel evidence.

- a. Studies show that evidence will be more persuasive when it is new to the audience.

- b. Presenting an audience new facts and figures requires resourceful research, but it is well worth the effort.

- 3. Persuasive speakers should use evidence from credible sources.

- a. There is good deal of research indicating that listeners find evidence from competent, credible sources more persuasive than evidence from less qualified sources.

- b. Listeners are especially skeptical about evidence from sources that appear to be biased or self-interested.

IV. A speaker's reasoning plays an important role in persuading the audience.

- A. Reasoning is the process of drawing a conclusion based on evidence.

(logic actually is evidence plus reasoning!)

- B. Public speakers have two major concerns with respect to reasoning.

- 1. The first is to make sure the speaker's reasoning is sound.

- 2. The second is to get listeners to agree with the speaker's reasoning.

- C. Persuasive speakers often use reasoning from specific instances.

- 1. When speakers reason from specific instances, they progress from a number of particular facts to general conclusion.

- 2. Speakers should follow three guidelines when reasoning from specific instances.

- a. They need to beware of hasty generalizations.

- b. They need to be careful with their wording so as not to overstate the facts.

- c. They need to reinforce their argument with statistics or testimony.

D. Persuasive speakers often use reasoning from principle.

- 1. When speakers reason from principle, they move from general principle to a specific conclusion.

- 2. Speakers should follow two basic guidelines when reasoning from principle.

- a. They need to make certain the audience will accept the general principle.

- b. They also need to make sure the audience will accept the minor premise.

E. Persuasive speakers often use causal reasoning.

- 1. Causal reasoning tries to establish the relationship between causes and effects.

- 2. Speakers should follow two guidelines when using causal reasoning.

- a. They should avoid the fallacy of false cause.

- b. Speakers should also avoid the fallacy of assuming that events only have one cause.

F. Persuasive speakers often use analogical reasoning.

- 1. Analogical reasoning compares two similar cases to draw the conclusion that is true in one case will also be true in the other.

2. The most important guideline for speakers using analogical reasoning is make sure the two cases being compared are essentially alike.

V. A speaker's emotional appeals play an important role in persuading the audience.

A. Emotional appeals-often called motivational appeals-are intended to make listeners feel sad, angry, guilty, fearful, reverent, or the like.

B. Effective persuasion often requires emotional appeal.

C. Speakers can generate emotional appeal in three ways.

1. One way to generate emotional appeal is with emotionally charged language.
2. A second way to generate emotional appeal is with vivid examples.
3. A third way to generate emotional appeal is to speak with sincerity and conviction.