

# TED's secret to great public speaking

TED curator Chris Anderson shares this secret -- along with four ways to make it work for you

# TED's secret to great public speaking

1. Focus on one major idea
2. Give people a reason to care
3. Build your idea with familiar concepts
4. Make your idea worth sharing



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# TED's secret to great public speaking

## 1. Focus on one major idea

- make it the through-line running through your entire talk, so that everything you say links back to it in some way

## 2. Give people a reason to care

- Use intriguing, provocative questions to identify why something doesn't make sense and needs explaining

## 3. Build your idea with familiar concepts

- Metaphors can play a crucial role in showing how the pieces fit together, based on an idea that the listener already understand

## 4. Make your idea worth sharing

- If you believe that the idea has the potential to brighten up someone else's day or change someone else's perspective for the better or inspire someone to do something differently, then you have the core ingredient to a truly great talk

# The opening of the TED Talk by George Monbiot

When I was a young man, I spent six years of wild adventure in the tropics, working as an investigative journalist in some of the most bewitching parts of the world. I was as reckless and foolish as only young men can be. This is why wars get fought. But I also felt more alive than I've ever done since. And when I came home, I found the scope of my existence gradually diminishing until loading the dishwasher seemed like an interesting challenge. And I found myself sort of scratching at the walls of life, as if I was trying to find a way out into a wider space beyond. I was, I believe, ecologically bored.

## **Speaking with meaning**

When he speaks, you hear something quite different.



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# When he speaks, you hear something quite different....

When I was a young man, I spent *six years of wild adventure* in the tropics working as an **investigative** journalist in some of the most **bewitching** parts of the world. I was as <sub>reck</sub>less and <sub>fool</sub>ish as only young men can be. This-is-why-wars-get-fought. But I *also* felt more *a l i v e* than I've ever done since. And when I came **H O M E**, I found the scope of my existence **gradually** diminishing until **loading the dishwasher seemed like an interesting challenge**. And I found myself sort of *scratching* at the *walls* of life, as if I was trying to find a way **OUT** into a *w i d e r* space beyond. I was, I believe, **ecologically bored**.

# Elements of Vocal Variety

- Volume (Loudness)
  - Pitch (Rise and Fall)
  - Pace (Rate)
  - Pause (Silence)
  - Timbre (Resonance, the way the voice feels e.g. rich, smooth, warm)
  - Tone (convey the mood, prosody)
- 
- [https://www.ted.com/talks/julian treasure how to speak so that people want to listen/  
transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen/transcript) from 4 minutes 26 seconds

# Elements of Vocal Variety

- Register - A person with a lower register who speaks from their chest is seen as more authoritative than someone who speaks from their nose.
- Timbre – speak slowly, with regular pauses and deep breaths
- Prosody - the rhythm and sound variation which makes up the notes we speak. Avoid speaking monotonously (extreme example – talking with babies)
- Pace - An authoritative speaker usually has a slow, deliberate method of delivery. Use pauses to emphasize important points and speed up certain sentences to create excitement.
- Volume - mix louder parts with quieter sections for impact

# Using your script:

- Find the two or three words in each sentence that carry the most significance, and underline them.
- Then look for the one word in each paragraph that *really* matters and underline it twice more.
- Find the sentence that is lightest in tone in the whole script and run a light wavy pencil line under it.
- Look for every question mark and highlight them with a yellow highlighter. Find the biggest single aha moment of the talk and inject a great big black blob right before it is revealed.

Now try reading your script, applying a change in tone for each mark. For example, let yourself smile while looking at the pink dots, pause for the big black blob, and speed up a little for the wavy pencil line, while speaking more softly.



# Tips

- One other important aspect to pay attention to: how fast you're speaking. First of all, it's great to vary your pacing according to what you're speaking about. When you're introducing key ideas or explaining something that's complex, slow down, and don't be afraid to insert pauses. During anecdotes and lighter moments, speed up.