TED's Secret to Great Public Speaking

**Introduction to TED Talks:-**

Some people think that there's a TED Talk formula: "**Give a talk on a round, red rug." "Share a childhood story." "Divulge a personal secret." "End with an inspiring call to action."** **(1)** No. That's not how to think of a TED Talk. In fact, if you overuse those devices, you're just going to come across as **clichéd or emotionally manipulative(2)**. But there is one thing that all great TED Talks have in common, and I would like to share that thing with you, because over the past 12 years, I've had a ringside seat, listening to many hundreds of amazing TED speakers, like these.

I've helped them prepare their talks for prime time, and learned directly from them their secrets of what makes for a great talk. And even though these speakers and their topics all seem completely different, they actually do have one key common ingredient. And it's this: Your number one task as a speaker is to transfer into your listeners' minds an extraordinary gift -- a strange and beautiful object that **we call an idea(3)**.

**The Concept of Ideas:-**

Let me show you what I mean. Here's Haley. She is about to give a TED Talk and frankly, she's terrified. (Video) Presenter: Haley Van Dyck! (Applause) Over the course of 18 minutes, 1,200 people, many of whom have never seen each other before, are finding that their brains are starting to **sync with Haley's brain and with each other(4).** They're literally beginning to exhibit the same brain-wave patterns. And I don't just mean they're feeling the same emotions. There's something even more startling happening. Let's take a look inside Haley's brain for a moment.

There are billions of interconnected neurons in an impossible tangle. But look here, right here -- **a few million of them are linked to each other in a way which represents a single idea.(5**) And incredibly, this exact pattern is being recreated in real time inside the minds of everyone listening. That's right; in just a few minutes, a pattern involving millions of neurons is being teleported into 1,200 minds, just by people listening to a voice and watching a face. But wait -- what is an idea anyway?

Well, you can think of it as a **pattern of information that helps you understand and navigate the world(6)** . Ideas come in all shapes and sizes, from the complex and analytical to the simple and aesthetic. Here are just a few examples shared from the TED stage.

- Sir Ken Robinson: Creativity is key to our kids' future. (Video) Sir Ken Robinson: My contention is that creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.

- Elora Hardy: Building from bamboo is beautiful. (Video) Elora Hardy: It is growing all around us, it's strong, it's elegant, it's earthquake-resistant.

- Chimamanda Adichie: People are more than a single identity. (Video) Chimamanda Adichie: The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.

CA: Your mind is teeming with ideas, and not just randomly. They're carefully linked together. Collectively they form an amazingly complex structure that is your personal worldview. It's your brain's operating system. It's how you navigate the world. And it is **built up out of millions of individual ideas.(7)**

**The Role of Worldviews:-**

So, for example, if one little component of your worldview is the idea that kittens are adorable, then when you see this, you'll react like this. But if another component of your worldview is the idea that leopards are dangerous, then when you see this, you'll react a little bit differently. So, it's pretty obvious why the ideas that make up your worldview are crucial. You need them to be as reliable as possible -- a guide to the scary but wonderful real world out there.

Now, different people's worldviews can be dramatically different. For example, how does your worldview react when you see this image: (Video) Dalia Mogahed: What do you think when you look at me? "A woman of faith," "an expert," maybe even "a sister"? Or "oppressed," "brainwashed," "a terrorist"?

CA: Whatever your answer, there are **millions of people out there who would react very differently(8).**  So that's why ideas really matter. If communicated properly, they're capable of changing, forever, how someone thinks about the world, and **shaping their actions both now and well into the future (9)**. Ideas are the most powerful force shaping human culture.

**Guidelines for Speakers:-**

So if you accept that your number one task as a speaker is to build an idea inside the minds of your audience, here are four guidelines for how you should go about that task:

1. \*\*Limit your talk **to just one major idea(10)**.\*\*

Ideas are complex things; you need to slash back your content so that you can focus on the single idea you're most passionate about, and give yourself a chance to explain that one thing properly. You have to give context, share examples, and make it vivid. So pick one idea, and make it the through-line running through your entire talk, so that everything you say links back to it in some way.

2. \*\*Give your listeners a reason to care.\*\*

Before you can start building things inside the minds of your audience, you have to get their permission to welcome you in. And the main tool to achieve that? Curiosity. Stir your audience's curiosity**. Use intriguing, provocative questions(11)** to identify why something doesn't make sense and needs explaining. If you can reveal a disconnection in someone's worldview, they'll feel the need to bridge that knowledge gap. And once you've sparked that desire, it will be so much easier to start building your idea.

3. \*\*Build your idea, piece by piece, out of concepts that your audience already understands.\*\*

You use the power of language to weave together concepts that already exist in your listeners' minds -- but not your language, their language. You start where they are. The speakers often forget that many of the terms and concepts they live with are completely unfamiliar to their audiences. Now, metaphors can play a crucial role in showing how the pieces fit together, because they reveal the desired shape of the pattern, based on an idea that the listener already understands. For example, when Jennifer Kahn wanted to explain the incredible new biotechnology called CRISPR, she said, "It's as if, for the first time, you had a word processor to edit DNA. CRISPR allows you to cut and paste genetic information really easily."

Now, a vivid explanation like that delivers a satisfying aha moment as it snaps into place in our minds. It's important, therefore, to test your talk on trusted friends, and find out which parts they get confused by.

4. \*\*Make your idea worth sharing.\*\*

By that I mean, ask yourself the question: "Who does this idea benefit?" And I need you to be honest with the answer. If the idea only serves you or your organization, then, I'm sorry to say, it's probably not worth sharing. The audience will see right through you. But if you believe that the idea has the potential to **brighten up someone else's day or change someone else's perspective(12,13)** for the better or inspire someone to do something differently, then you have the core ingredient to a truly great talk, one that can be a gift to them and to all of us.

---

---

1. \*\*What is NOT part of the supposed TED Talk formula?\*\*

a) Giving a talk on a round, red rug

b) Divulging a personal secret

c) Ending with an inspiring call to action

d) Discussing complex theories only

\*(Answer: d)\*

\*[First paragraph]\*

2. \*\*What happens if a speaker overuses devices like sharing personal secrets and childhood stories?\*\*

a) The talk becomes more relatable

b) The speaker comes across as clichéd or manipulative

c) The audience is more engaged

d) The idea becomes clearer

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[First paragraph]\*

3. \*\*What is the one thing all great TED Talks have in common?\*\*

a) They are based on humor

b) They end with an inspiring call to action

c) They always share a personal story

d) They transfer an extraordinary idea into listeners' minds

\*(Answer: d)\*

\*[First paragraph]\*

4. \*\*What happens to the brains of listeners during a TED Talk?\*\*

a) They stop functioning

b) They sync with the speaker's brain and each other

c) They produce more emotions

d) They reject new ideas

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[Second paragraph]\*

5. \*\*What does an idea represent inside the brain?\*\*

a) A pattern of interconnected neurons

b) A random thought

c) A biological function

d) A physical object

\*(Answer: a)\*

\*[Second paragraph]\*

6. \*\*What is an idea according to the speaker?\*\*

a) A pattern of information that helps navigate the world

b) A random thought that comes and goes

c) An emotion that triggers feelings

d) A memory of past experiences

\*(Answer: a)\*

\*[Second paragraph]\*

7. \*\*What forms the complex structure of a person's worldview?\*\*

a) Random thoughts and memories

b) Millions of individual ideas

c) Social influences only

d) Genetic factors

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[Third paragraph]\*

8. \*\*How do different worldviews react to the same image?\*\*

a) Everyone reacts the same

b) Reactions depend on personal experiences and beliefs

c) There is no reaction

d) People react based on their physical environment

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[Third paragraph]\*

9. \*\*Why are ideas so important according to the speaker?\*\*

a) They make people feel emotional

b) They provide entertainment

c) They help shape how people think and act

d) They are only useful for specific fields

\*(Answer: c)\*

\*[Third paragraph]\*

10. \*\*What is the first guideline for giving a TED Talk?\*\*

a) Share multiple ideas

b) Avoid complex topics

c) Start with a personal story

d) Focus on just one major idea

\*(Answer: d)\*

\*[Fourth paragraph]\*

11. \*\*What is one tool to spark curiosity in the audience?\*\*

a) Starting with a joke

b) Using intriguing, provocative questions

c) Giving a lengthy introduction

d) Presenting complicated data

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[Fourth paragraph]\*

12. \*\*Why should a speaker make their idea worth sharing?\*\*

a) To benefit themselves

b) To brighten someone's day or inspire change

c) To sound more professional

d) To impress the audience

\*(Answer: b)\*

\*[Fourth paragraph]\*

13. \*\*Why is making an idea worth sharing essential for a TED Talk?\*\*

a) It shows the speaker is genuine

b) It helps the speaker’s care

c) It benefits both the audience and others

d) It aligns the talk with TED’s goals

\*(Answer: c)\*

\*[Fourth paragraph]\*

---

Group 6

23EE10093 Yogesh Kushwaha

23EE10096 Aditya Kashyap

23MT30026 Souradeep Das