



Book Stand and Deliver

How to Become a Masterful Communicator and Public Speaker

Dale Carnegie Training
Touchstone, 2011

Recommendation

Dale Carnegie Training offers a truly outstanding book on public speaking in the name of its founder, Dale Carnegie. Among other techniques, this guide teaches readers how to deal with glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, which is the world's most common phobia. The Carnegie organization's training tactics are known for turning fearful, nervous presenters into dynamic, powerful speechmakers. This book is as valuable for orators as *Gray's Anatomy* is for medical professionals. If only it weren't written in the first person, as if Dale Carnegie himself were giving you advice – as he no doubt would be glad to do, had he not died in 1955. Carnegie, the author of the classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, may well be an immortal author, but the use of his first-person voice decades later is a little jarring. Other than this minor haunting, *BooksInShort* recommends this eminently practical book to both aspiring and accomplished public speakers.

Take-Aways

- Many people greatly fear public speaking.
- However, anyone can learn how to deliver strong speeches. It's a matter of knowing what to do and how to do it, and being determined to do it well.
- Practice giving numerous speeches to eliminate any fear of public speaking.
- The first rule of speechmaking is to learn all you can about your topic.
- The second is to rehearse, over and over, until you know your speech thoroughly.
- Never learn a speech by heart. You may suffer a memory lapse at the podium.
- Be earnest and sincere when you speak before an audience. Such winning personality traits will quickly get the crowd on your side.
- Audiences love to hear about themselves, so always work information about them into your speech.
- To win over listeners, add relevant, personal anecdotes and stories to your speeches.
- When you speak, use simple words, but not too many of them. And whatever you do, don't speak for too long.

Summary

Anyone Can Speak Well in Public

No matter who you are or how fearful you may be of addressing an audience, you can become a powerful speaker. To do so, learn everything you can about your subject. About 10 days to two weeks before your presentation, spend 20 minutes writing no fewer than 50 questions about your topic. In another session, learn their answers. This will help you create an outline for your speech. Now, start rehearsing repeatedly – in your mind, in the car, before a mirror or with your friends.

“Old-fashioned oratory, in which the speaker sets off all kinds of verbal fireworks, just won't work in a contemporary setting.”

Don't memorize your speech. Your recall may fail at the podium. Instead, know it so well you can speak naturally, using your prepared answers as your main points. As you rehearse, your presentation's structure will take form. Speak naturally, not in a forced or histrionic tone. Practice how to stress different words and phrases. Alternate your timing, delivery and vocal pitch. Try talking at various speeds to see what works best.

Be Yourself

Speak straight from the heart. Be true to yourself. Dale Carnegie and Earl Nightingale, both superb public speakers, spoke naturally, each according to his individual personality, background, and natural talents. With his Missouri farm roots, Carnegie spoke freely and easily, like someone chatting with a neighbor. Nightingale, who possessed a remarkably powerful voice, was a famous radio broadcaster for more than three decades. His dramatic delivery was totally different from Carnegie's sound. Yet both were well-regarded public speakers – by being themselves.

“The best way to sound like you know what you're talking about is to know what you're talking about.” (Anonymous.)

Like all effective speakers, Carnegie and Nightingale made their audiences the focus of their speeches. All audiences love to hear about themselves. Russell Conwell, a popular public speaker, delivered his most famous speech, “Acres of Diamonds,” almost 6,000 times. Each time, he made the speech different, depending on where he gave it. Prior to each engagement, Conwell talked with local townspeople, including ministers, school principals and barbers, to find out what was on the minds of the people in the community. Then he delivered his speech accordingly. Be conscious of your audience – but also of yourself. Dress smartly. Move around in a planned, carefully limited way on stage. Use eye contact to connect with people in your audience.

Does the Idea of Public Speaking Make You Want to Hide?

You can control your fear of public speaking, but first you must truly want to communicate with your audience. See yourself in the role of a messenger who must deliver a vital message. Psychologist William James taught that bravery derives from simply acting bravely. Use this approach on stage. Remind yourself of the benefits of effective public speaking. To take your mind off yourself, use props when you speak publicly.

“Human beings are talking beings.”

The best way to overcome the fear of any activity is to do it, over and over again, until it becomes second nature. This rule applies to every facet of life, including public speaking. Give yourself credit for your speech preparation. Let all your hard work move you along when you are on stage. While you are speaking, reserve judgment about how you are doing until later. Don't let anyone distract or discourage you. If your speech bombs, learn from that failure so you will give a better speech next time. Spend an hour a day developing your writing skills. List your goals and write 20 steps you can take now to “deeply embed” your objectives in your “subconscious mind.”

“Persuasion is the result of suggestion or instinct rather than logical processes.”

When he first started out as a writer, novelist Stephen King, then a poor laundry worker, received one rejection notice after another from publishers. One day, after he'd received two rejections, he threw out the manuscript for his book *Carrie*. His wife retrieved it and sent it to Doubleday, which published it. *Carrie* sold in the millions, and King was on his way to fame and fortune.

Did You Hear the One About...?

Humor is a valuable tool for speakers, but you don't have to be funny to use humor in your speeches. However, you do need to communicate to your audience that you want them to get a laugh from your speech – you want them to be happy. Gracefully tie your humor to your presentation, but don't use awkward transitions, like “That reminds me of a story.”

“Sincerity needs to be combined with intensity. Along with your authenticity, you need to communicate your energy.”

One way to add humor to any presentation is to make yourself the butt of a joke, just as funnyman and supposed notorious tightwad Jack Benny did on his radio show. In a famous skit, a robber held up Benny, saying, “Your money or your life.” As Benny's pause grew longer, the audience completely broke down, laughing uncontrollably. Once his listeners regained their composure, the robber repeated his demand: “I said your money or your life.” Benny's measured reply: “I'm thinking. I'm thinking.” The audience again exploded into extended laughter as Benny acted the part of a skinflint in a supposed life-or-death quandary. His self-deprecating humor was a hit. Of course, use comedy judiciously. Be sure the context of your speech lends itself to levity.

Tell Stories About Others

Great orators wrap their speeches in stories and anecdotes that personalize their topics. Generally, focus your anecdotes on other people, not yourself, unless they reveal something meaningful and personal about you. Such stories touch your listeners' hearts. Abraham Lincoln was a master at weaving such stories into his speeches to provide emotional relief from his intellectual content. Emulate Lincoln: Get your audience to think and feel. Stories and anecdotes help people sense the emotions in your speech and reflect on your message.

“Opposing ideas are much less likely to arise when the main idea is presented with feeling and contagious enthusiasm.”

Touching audience members' feelings creates an intimate bond with each person. This is what President Franklin D. Roosevelt did with his “fireside chats,” his radio broadcasts to the nation. Roosevelt always imagined that he was speaking to a single person, someone sitting with him. Even though he could not see his audience, he smiled and used friendly gestures as he spoke. Do the same during your speeches. Choose your words with care. Don't use big words if small ones will do. Don't use 30 words if you only need 15. Make your crucial points, and then repeat them.

Don't Make Your Rhetoric Rhetorical

People speak in public for three reasons: “to inform, to entertain or to inspire action.” The latter is by far the most common. If the goal of your speech is to motivate others to act, you want people to respond with, “Let's march!” and not, “That was a lovely speech.” Make your goal clear by moving your audience members' feelings, and gaining their interest and confidence. Be sincere, earnest, and straightforward to forge a powerful connection, and persuade people to line up enthusiastically, no matter how preposterous your proposal.

“Tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em. Tell ‘em. And then tell ‘em what you told ‘em.”

Use your experiences to lend color and meaning to your speech as you support your primary theme with facts. To motivate audience members to take action, speak in terms of their desires – for example, their wishes for personal gain or their fear of loss. One primary human desire is to gain admiration. Lincoln grew his beard to appear authoritative and gain credibility; he wanted people to admire him. When you help audience members feel proud of themselves, you create the best opening for motivating them to take the actions you advocate.

You Need a Fast Start

Use a strong opening to get off to a fast start in winning over your audience. Plan and practice every word of your speech’s important beginning. Use words that immediately capture the interest of your listeners. If you don’t seize their attention within the first five seconds, you are in trouble. Pique their curiosity. State an outcome so they become eager to learn the cause. Hold up something they want to see and learn more about, or ask them a question. Having a great opening that makes audience members sit on the edge of their seats is a terrific way to develop confidence as a speaker. Such confidence can carry you through to the end of your speech.

Persuade Your Audience

Audiences can be skeptical, but you can use three techniques to convince them to adopt your point of view: present a rational argument, excite emotions, and use your strength of character and personality as influential levers. No matter which approach you take, frame your message in a compelling way by using the five “building blocks of persuasion”:

1. **“Invention”** – Determine the best, most creative way to declare your point. You want to make a memorable statement, like President John F. Kennedy did in his inaugural address when he said, “The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans.”
2. **“Arrangement”** – Take care with the way you organize the ideas in your speech and how you introduce your theme. Establish three parts in your speech: “a beginning, a middle and an end.”
3. **“Style”** – You will project your personality through the words you choose and the way you write your speech. Decide which traits to embody. Use a style that fits the occasion while being true to yourself.
4. **“Memory”** – While you should not learn your speech by heart, you have easy-to-recall mileposts, such as six major points, so you can concentrate and stay on track.
5. **“Delivery”** – The “manner in which you say things,” how you physically speak, is your delivery. It is strictly an audio channel, and getting it right requires lots of practice.

“Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening.” (American performer Dorothy Sarnoff)

To influence your audience, use the power of suggestion instead of arguing. People want to believe; they do not welcome doubt. Help your audience believe you by introducing memorable concepts and wiping any contradictory ideas from their consideration. If you present your main ideas in a strong, convincing and enthusiastic fashion, opposing ideas will find little purchase. Enthusiasm is contagious. Repetition is persuasive. You can say the same thing over and over, but don’t say it the same way twice. Change it a bit. Present your main ideas in several different ways so you don’t sound boring. Trade on positive associations to influence the audience.

“The Magic Formula”

Decades ago, Dale Carnegie Training developed a surefire plan for public speaking: the three-step Magic Formula. Use it to motivate audience members to take action:

1. Share some type of “personal experience” that relates to a specific action you want your listeners to take. Deliver a lesson by re-creating your personal experience so vividly that it has the same impact on the members of your audience that it had on you. “Put your heart in your words.”
2. Directly ask your listeners to carry out the action you are recommending. As briefly and as concretely as possible, tell them what you want them to do.
3. Explain what advantage they will gain by doing so. In brief, tell the audience how they will benefit from taking action as you suggest.

“It’s quite simple. Say what you have to say and when you come to a sentence with a grammatical ending, sit down.” (Winston Churchill)

This speech plan is ideal for between two and three minute speeches. Audience members will quickly become emotionally involved in your personal story, but they won’t catch on to your primary speech point until your speech is nearly over – a powerful moment of revelation.

Wrapping Things Up

Make the end of your speech as memorable as the opening. Plan it just as carefully. Write your ending. Practice until it flows naturally. Do not end your speech with a trite thank you. Instead, end it with words and thoughts that the members of your audience will not forget. Never waste their time, always involve them and never talk for too long.

“It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.” (Mark Twain)

The question-and-answer session after your speech is another opportunity to engage your listeners. This wrap-up period gives you an opportunity to clarify your message and emphasize your main points. Control the Q&A period by setting a time limit so audience members know how long they have to pose questions and receive your answers.

“Be sincere; be brief; be seated.” (Franklin D. Roosevelt)

Establish proper eye contact with the people who ask questions. If you don’t know the answer to a question, be honest and tell the questioner that you don’t know. Don’t let any question deflect you from your main message.

About the Author

Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, founded Dale Carnegie Training, which has taught leadership and presentation skills to some seven million people.
