

## *How to Make Your Presentation Shine*

ps

*Imagine* for a minute that you are standing in front of a room of people and you are truly, authentically, even vulnerably YOU ... AND you feel comfortable and excited to be there.

- You look and act like a leader
- You are making authentic and powerful connections with your audience
- You are telling unforgettable stories
- Your ideas are clear and memorable
- You are handling difficult questions without getting defensive or shutting down
- You feel only the nervous excitement that comes when something matters ... a lot
- You know you've got this

**Sound like a dream? It's not. It's possible! And I'm going to tell you how.**

ps

## *The Journey to Polished Speaking Starts Here*

I am going to share with you some of the methods we use at The Polished Speaker to help our clients embark on their journeys to becoming effective presenters. Working on these steps has helped them make authentic connections in their lives and engage fully and honestly no matter what the interaction ... to help them to shine before their audiences of 1 or 1,000.

### *5 First Steps to Becoming a Polished Speaker*

- 1 • Begin at the end
- 2 • Show up with true leadership presence
- 3 • Be brave
- 4 • Be positive
- 5 • Start today

## • 1 • *Begin at the End*

**Your presentation is a *present*. What gift are you giving to your audience in exchange for their attention? Name it, know it.**

Think about the impact you want to have on your audience. How will your presentation be helpful to them? How will your message serve them? What do you want them to “take away” from it? To learn? To be inspired to do?

Clarity of purpose allows you to work backwards to create a presentation that will achieve your goal(s). Knowing the destination – what you want them to learn or do – allows you to map a course to get there – to craft your presentation so that it accomplishes that.

## • 2 • *Improve your Leadership Presence*

At The Polished Speaker, addressing “leadership presence” tends to be a large part of the work we do. Clients often come to me thinking the best speakers have some “X factor” unique to them that makes them capable of effectively moving an audience towards a goal. However, research has shown and I am quick to point out that leadership ability *resides within each of us*. So the question is: “how can we find and hone our own X factor to become the outstanding leaders we’d like to be?”

If you want people to trust you enough to listen, you need to bring your authentic, best self to the occasion. Become intentional about showing up with your strengths front and center.

I am strong, brave, caring and sometimes funny. I also overthink things and I have a tendency to worry.

When I speak to an audience I am *intentional* about how much of me I share. If I choose to share my weaknesses, it’s because sharing those will serve my audience and my message. Otherwise, I’ll leave those behind and bring my best self into the room.

**Here are my best tips for improving *your* leadership presence:**

**YOU are your most important visual aid.**

Make sure your energy and body language reinforce your message. Don’t hide behind a slide deck. Your energy sends a signal to the unconscious minds of your audience, and they can’t help but to tune in.

**Stand tall with confidence.**

Take up space and know that you belong there. After all, you are sharing a message that matters. Shoulders back – your Mom was right, posture is important!

**Really look into the eyes of your audience.**

Think of presenting as having mini-conversations with every person in the room. Make connections, give them your best attention.

**Connect with their minds and hearts.**

Learn to tell compelling stories that bring your ideas to life.

**Host the party.**

When you present to a group, you are in charge of creating the “mood” – you are essentially a host. Be the ‘host with the most’ and remember that your job is to ensure engagement and connection.

**Don't forget to Breathe**

Your voice says more about who you are than almost anything else. Remember, it's a wind instrument that requires ... well ... wind! So remember to breathe! Deeper tones resonate, and it's best if your voice has a pleasant melody. Avoid one note – that gets boring fast.

**Never get defensive.**

If you are sharing something that matters, there is bound to be someone who disagrees. Never, ever get defensive. Unless someone says something downright hateful, say “Thank you, you've given me something to think about ...” and then return to your ideas. This is a better approach than “Yes, but you are wrong.”

**Respect power dynamics.**

Even though there is just one of you, and many in your audience, you've got the floor so you've got the power. At least your audience will perceive it that way. Never embarrass an audience member; it will backfire on you.

**Build them up.**

It's not about you, it's about them. *“People are empowered not by what they know is true, but by what they believe is possible.”* – Neil Gordon. Understand your relative power, and use it to empower your audience

• 3 • *Be Brave*

*“Feel the fear and do it anyway”* – it's my favorite definition of being brave.

We began this by agreeing that it can be terrifying to put yourself out there and it's important to acknowledge that this is hard, that you're going to need some courage to pull it off.

First, remind yourself of those times when you have demonstrated that you are capable of bravery. We've all already done hard things in our lives. We know we have the ability to “be brave” when the stakes are high.

So, when was it? That time you were brave? I bet it was fueled by something pretty important to you. I bet you were going after something that went deeper than money (when you asked for a raise), or time (when you asked for a day off).

The easiest way to be brave is to focus on a heart-centered purpose. Giving your audience the “present” we spoke of above – knowing that the “gift” you're giving them will help improve their lives somehow – *that* is your purpose. Let that purpose fuel your bravery.

#### • 4 • *Be positive and instill hope*

Show that you are listening and that you've taken time to understand the needs of your audience. Have compassion and an awareness of what they are up against. Rather than coerce compliance, *persuade* them that there is a better way. Help them understand the lessons of the past, the realities of the present, and the possibilities of the future. Give them hope.

#### • 5 • *Start Today*

Don't wait. Trust that you can become a polished speaker, capable of making an authentic and lasting impact – whether you are speaking to an audience of 1 or 1,000. You've taken the first step on the journey. Take one more step - *right now* – and then another and another.

---

*pS*

#### *One last thing ...*

Great presenters understand the importance of preparation and practice. A mentor or coach can be an invaluable partner on your journey to becoming more polished. You *can* improve by going it alone, but it's harder. A mentor lends outside perspective, provides insight about how you come across to others, and will help you to uncover what is getting in your way.

Congratulations on getting in touch and taking a first step in learning how to present your most authentic self. If I can help you continue the journey, if you have any questions, or even if you'd just like to chat, I hope you'll email me at [cwiles@thepolishedspeaker.com](mailto:cwiles@thepolishedspeaker.com).

Wishing you all the best,

*Cheryl*