

# The Well-Spoken WOMAN

## **Speak Out with Credibility & Conviction**



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# **The Well-Spoken Woman: Speaks Out**

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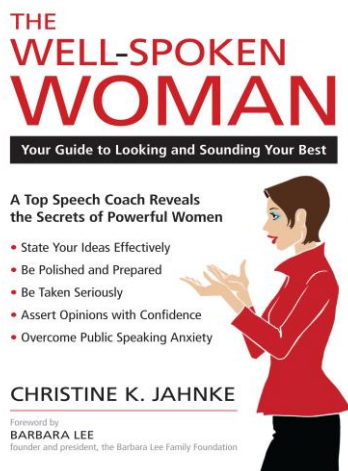
# How to Be Well Spoken

Becoming well-spoken begins with you being yourself on purpose.

The most successful speakers are the ones who are willing to work at it. The biggest myth is that the people who are the most accomplished were born with the talent. Some may be more charismatic but the best speakers hone their skills over time. As the former governor of Texas Ann Richards said, "If you give us a chance, we can perform. After all Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards and in high heels."

To help you excel we are providing this summary of the techniques discussed in the training class. For more practical tips ***The Well-Spoken Woman: Your Guide to Looking & Sounding Your Best*** is available at [www.wellspokenwoman.com](http://www.wellspokenwoman.com) and online.

Best Wishes!  
Chris Jahnke



## **I. Signature Style – Delivery Techniques**

### **A. The First Impression**

“You had me at hello.”

Start as strongly as possible! Audience members draw a first impression of a speaker in a matter of seconds. The beginning of a presentation is the time to capture the audience’s attention, even imagination.

Make the opening a highlight by greeting the audience visually. When walking into a room, onto a stage, or up to a head table, a speaker is communicating even though no words are spoken. Don’t stare at feet or notes. Stand up straight with shoulders slightly back and arms loose. The head should be up and eyes focused on the audience. Use a strong smile to project the confidence of a leader.

Greet the audience verbally with a brief hello about 10 seconds in length. Be prepared with a version of: “Good morning, everyone. I’m delighted to have this opportunity to talk with you today.” This provides a moment for the speaker to establish eye contact with the audience. Solid, steady eye contact communicates confidence and allows the speaker to quickly develop a rapport with the listeners.

#### **Checklist for the First Impression**

Greet the audience visually and verbally  
Make eye contact with the people in the room  
Stand up straight with shoulders back and a smile  
Say hello and introduce yourself

### **B. Podium Presence**

What is your body language communicating? Do you face the room or turn away slightly? Do you subtly try to hide behind a table? Is your posture off balance?

Women tend to be space savers while men tend to be space consumers. Men eat up space by holding themselves erect, pumping up the chest, and spreading arms and legs. Women are space savers. Women move aside for others, hold gestures tight to the body, and cross legs. We tend to shrink rather than expand on stage. It’s time to blow those stereotypes out of the water. The Well-Spoken Woman’s Power Moves will help you stop shrinking and start expanding.

## **Posture and Movement**

Looking like a leader starts with standing like one. Get off on the right foot by changing up your foot stance. Don't stand with your feet shoulder width apart because this locks the knees. Rather, position one foot slightly in front of the other, about two or three inches apart. Experiment to figure out which foot you prefer to place in the forward position. Pick which ever one feels more comfortable. Point your toes straight ahead.

Next, stand up straight with your body weight resting on the back leg. The knees will be looser, you will feel more relaxed, and look less rigid. With the feet in place and weight on the back leg, position your face forward to the audience. To complete the sure stance position, imagine there is a string attached to the lower part of your spinal column. The string extends up the spinal cord, through the neck, and out the top of the head. Project the string straight up from the crown of your head into the ceiling.

Next, drop your shoulders back slightly. Don't stick your chest out. Just drop your shoulders back with your arms loose at your sides. If you raise your hands to waist level this will help drop your shoulders. The shoulder drop is the secret to projecting confidence.

At this point, if there is movement in your body it will be forward because your body weight is on the back leg. This movement keeps the knees loose and is interactive because you are moving toward the audience. This stance prevents you from swaying side-to-side or nervously shifting body weight from one foot to the other. Try this in front of a mirror and see how confident you look. These tips create a sure stance, the stance of a champion.

Movement around the room should be purposeful, not random. Otherwise, the speaker may appear to be pacing back-n-forth like a lion trapped in a cage. Purposeful movement can convey enthusiasm about a topic and it can be much more interesting for the audience to watch. Plus, a speaker who is comfortable moving away from the lectern, closer to the audience will feel more connected.

## **Seated Posture**

In some situations, it may be more appropriate to remain seated, such as a panel discussion. On those occasions, sit up straight, shoulders back and then tilt forward from the waist leaning toward the audience. There are three different options for legs. What you do depends on your height, what you are wearing, and the type of chair. If your feet touch the ground comfortably and you are wearing pants, try the runner's position. Just like it sounds place one foot slightly in front of the other on the ground as if you are about to take off in a 100-yard dash. This position allows you to balance your body weight forward on your feet.

If you are wearing a dress or a skirt, it is more "ladylike" to cross your legs at the knee. Don't forget to sit up and lean forward. If you are shorter in height and/or wearing a dress or skirt, try crossing your ankles and pulling both feet straight under the chair. This position will reduce the leg shot, showing less thigh and more skirt. It will help ensure your feet touch the ground and works well when the chair lacks support.

When seated behind a table or desk, put hands and forearms on the table. Keep the hands still unless gestures are being used. Never lace the fingers or twiddle the thumbs.

### **Facial Expression**

Facial expression should match the words coming out of your mouth. Look like you are happy if you say you are. This sounds obvious but it is not unusual for people to start a presentation by mouthing the words: "I'm pleased to join you" with a less than happy or even grim expression. They are often concentrating too much on what they are going to say and not thinking about what their expression is communicating.

Some faces are more naturally more expressive than others. SNL's Kate McKinnon can morph from Attorney General Jeff Sessions to Hillary Clinton to actress Gal Gadot. Use facial expression to signal confidence. Men are rarely if ever told to smile and you may resent being asked to do so. But, an open-mouthed smile at the beginning of a talk sets a positive tone. A closed-mouth smile may look like a smirk. A tight-lipped smile can be perceived as an attempt to mask anger. A twisted smile may convey sarcasm. The smile isn't about being happy or wanting to be accepted. A wide smile shows you are comfortable and in control.

A confident expression at the beginning can mirror the expression you would like the audience to reflect back to you. Psychologists say that mirroring is a way to bond and we do it instinctively. The most obvious forms are the yawn and the smile. If you see someone yawn you are likely to yawn in the next 30 seconds. A purposeful smile allows you to set a positive tone.

If your subject matter is grim a smile can appear flip or disrespectful. Should you be responsible for delivering bad news, use steady eye contact and a neutral expression. This will help you convey the seriousness of the situation.

### **Eye Contact**

Good eye contact is essential to connect with the audience. The lack of eye contact creates the impression that the speaker is unprepared or is unfamiliar with the subject matter. Thus, the speaker loses credibility. Eye contact also provides the speaker with important feedback. If the speaker is reading from a manuscript or staring at PowerPoint slides, it is impossible to know whether or not the listeners are engaged.

The key to solid eye contact is to look at individuals. Keep eyes steady on one person until you finish a sentence or a thought. Then, look at another person seated in another area of the room and again maintain eye contact until the thought is finished. Use the quadrant system discussed in the training session. The quadrant system allows the speaker to establish meaningful eye contact with everyone in the room.

## **Eye Contact Don'ts**

- Head down during greeting.
- Constantly turning your head side to side.
- Rapid eye darts around the room.
- Body turned to projection screen.
- Searching the heavens or staring at the floor.
- Head buried in notes.

## **Hand Gestures**

Use hand gestures to emphasize important points, externalize anxiety, and add vocal inflection. Don't hold anything in the hands such as loose pieces of paper or pens. These items are distracting, particularly when waved around. If hand gestures feel uncomfortable, try holding the hands at waist level and using rounded, smooth movements.

Try to avoid pointing at specific members of the audience. Pointing makes a speaker look like a scolding school teacher. Also, avoid flipping the hands from the wrist like a Tyrannosaurus Rex or the karate chop. Movement should smooth and relaxed.

## **Importance of Silent Messages**

Audience members form an opinion about a speaker based on body language and tone of voice, more so than content. In fact, the audience can be so preoccupied with nonverbal messages that while they do 'hear' the words, they rely on the actions of the speaker to interpret what is being said. Psychologist Albert Mehrabian writes, "our silent messages may contradict what we may say in words; in either event, they are more potent in communication than the words we speak.... Audiences weigh our actions more than our words as they try to understand what we feel."

According to Mehrabian, the audience's initial impression of the speaker is drawn most heavily from what they see. Visual information accounts for 55% of what the audience takes in. Voice quality accounts for 38% of the audience's reaction. The remaining 7% of the impact comes from the words.

Visual	55%
Vocal	38%
Verbal	7%

These findings underscore the importance of creating a strong first impression with the voice and effective body language.

### **C. Vocal Gravitas**

Interesting voices create impact. Some voices are instantly recognizable such as radio host Terry Gross of *NPR* or the poet and author Maya Angelou. There are five voice characteristics that every speaker can control to increase vocal capacity and to make the voice sparkle.

#### **Pitch**

A voice that lacks any change in pitch is monotone. A dull, flat voice can lull an audience to sleep particularly after a heavy meal or at the end of a long conference. Add interest by purposefully changing the pitch, adding inflection. Raise and lower the pitch using a full range of musical notes. But, avoid a sing-song pattern such as an up-lilt at the end of a sentence. Repetitively raising the pitch will sound like you are asking a question versus making a declarative statement.

Some voices break into a high-pitched squeak when a speaker is nervous. At moments of high stress the normal adult speaking voice can undergo a sudden change or pitch-break into a falsetto. When First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt first entered public life, she suffered from shyness and dreaded speaking in public. Her voice would rise until it hit the highest notes and then would often end in a nervous laugh.

Women have a slightly higher pitch because the female vocal cords are shorter in length. High tones can connote nervousness or uncontrolled excitement. Lower tones are warmer and connote control, authority, expertise. A higher pitched voice can be softened by purposefully lowering the pitch on key words and phrases. Eleanor Roosevelt eventually improved her voice by controlling the pitch.

Warming up the voice, can do wonders for the quality of the tone. Use deep breathing techniques to relax before you go on stage. Avoid drinking ice water because the cold temperature constricts the vocal cords. Drink warm tea or room temperature water to soothe the throat.

#### **Pace**

An ideal pace is a conversational rate. This rate is pleasing to the listeners and provides the speaker with time to breathe properly. For fast talkers, slowing down requires concentration and practice. A moderate rate of speech is approximately 125 to 145 words per minute.

With an overall conversational rate, the speech will be much more dynamic if the rate changes from time to time. Varying the speed prevents a sluggish tempo. Vocal theorist Max Atkinson found “by combining these different techniques to package and deliver their messages, orators can communicate to their audiences that a change of mood or tempo is taking place. They can signal that they are, as it were, ‘changing gear,’ and launching into a sequence which will be worthy of closer examination.”



## **Pause**

If there is a vocal technique that is under used, it is the pause. Use the technique to dramatically highlight key words and phrases. The pause serves as a vocal signal to the audience to pay attention because what is coming next is important. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. used pauses to punctuate his “I Have a Dream” speech.

The pause can be used as a transition from main idea to main idea. The pause signals that the speaker is moving on to another topic. Pauses also allow audience members to take in what is being said. The silence gives the listeners a quick moment to synthesize the meaning of the words. Sometimes it is tempting to hurry through a presentation, particularly if the speech has been given before. Bear in mind that the information is brand new to the audience. Pauses allow the audience time to hear and remember.

Speakers who don’t pause may fall in the habit of using gutter words such as, “um,” or “uh.” Don’t fill what should be silence with noise.

## **Pronunciation**

It has been said, “when in doubt, mumble.” But as author Jeff Scott Cook writes “people who speak softly and with poor diction are regarded as less decisive, less intelligent, and more poorly informed than those who speak with round vowels and crisp consonants.”

Another good reason to use a moderate rate of pace, is that a slower pace allows the speaker to clearly pronounce each word. If the speech is rushed, it is easy to drop the hard consonants like “t” and “d” at the ends of words, creating a slurred sound. By fully articulating each syllable of each word, pronunciation will be clear.

## **Projection**

Purposefully, changing the projection or volume is another way to add interest. Never shout or scream especially when using a microphone but raising or lowering volume can help draw attention to important points.

Some speakers are unable to fully project their voice, particularly when talking before large groups in large rooms without audio amplification. Sometimes breathing problems can be the reason for a lack of volume. Some people have softer voices. If you have a soft voice, always request a microphone when speaking before groups larger than 25 people, in large rooms, or outside.

## **D. Appropriate Appearance & Attire**

Wear professional, stylish clothes that are comfortable and well-tailored. Don't allow clothing or accessories to become an issue. Eliminate styles and accessories that will distract the listener from the message. Plan the outfit in advance so you aren't caught in a bind. It's the night before and your skirt has a stain or the hem on your slacks is ripped.

Without fail, the room temperature will either be too hot or too cold. Layering gives you options. Check out the backdrop of the auditorium, studio set, or debate stage. If it is a light-colored with beige furniture, wear a darker color so you don't fade into the background. If there are lots of busy graphics and TV monitors, wear a dark color so you will stand out.

### **Test Drive the Outfit**

1. Public speaking is a physical activity. In some scenarios you need to be able to stand for long periods, walk comfortably, sit, and move your arms.
2. Clothing choices should be practical. Pockets are handy for notecards, tissue, throat lozenges, or a clicker.
3. A waist band will hold a microphone power pack.
4. A good fit no matter your size will be more comfortable.
5. Accessories like bracelets can be noisy and large rings can be visually distracting.

Here are some special considerations if the event will be live-streamed, taped for YouTube viewing, or broadcast:

### **What to Wear On-Camera**

- Business suit, dress, or pantsuit
- Fabrics with texture: wool, linen, cotton
- Rich solid colors: turquoise, royal purple, red (choose flattering colors)
- Light colored blouses (cream, pastels)
- HDTV foundation, powder, and matte lipstick
- Dull finished jewelry (pearls, beads)
- Eyeglasses with rimless or light frames and nonreflective lenses
- Contemporary, flattering hairstyle

### **What Not to Wear On-Camera**

- Black, white, and shiny fabrics can be unflattering under intense studio lights
- Busy patterns such as paisley, stripes, plaids, florals
- Low necklines and too short skirts or dresses
- Flashy, expensive jewelry can send the wrong signal
- Bright gold or silver jewelry which will reflect lights
- Keep hair out of your face so viewers can see both eyes

## **II. Preparing the Remarks**

### **A. Advancing the Event & Audience Profile**

Gather information about the speaking event well in advance, so preparation can begin early. Start by contacting the person who sent the invitation to get an overview of the audience, program, and the occasion. Ask questions before you accept an invitation. That way you can make a decision about whether the event is worth the investment in preparation time before you commit. Are you speaking to five decision makers in a board room, 50 video conference participants, or 500 annual meeting attendees? Is the agenda well-organized and likely to put forward a program that you are excited to participate in?

Each occasion is unique in tone, setting, audience, room arrangement, visual aids, and planning approach. Understanding the nature of the event will determine the type of talk to give. Use the following list of event profile questions to ensure you have a thorough understanding of the program and your role.

#### **Getting Ready - Logistics**

1. What is the event or type of speech – keynote, panel discussion, board presentation, staff meeting, or something else?
2. How much time is available to speak?
3. How many people will attend?
4. Where will the event be held?
5. How large is the room and how will it be arranged?
6. What audio/video equipment is available?
7. Who will give the introduction?
8. Will there be other speakers on the program?
9. What attire is appropriate?
10. Will food be served?
11. Will the audience be able to ask questions?
12. Will photographers or the news media be present?

### **Who's in the Room?**

Always consider the speech from the perspective of the audience members so it can be tailored for them. Who are they and how much do they know about the subject matter. Are they well-versed or unfamiliar? Is the subject controversial or sensitive? Are they on board or will they need convincing? Additionally, consider possible points of disagreement or contention. The following questions will help you think through who they are and why they are listening.

1. Who are they?
  - Profession/occupation
  - Level of education
  - Demographic make-up
2. Why are the audience members attending the presentation?
3. What is the audience's level of experience/familiarity with the topic?
4. What is your relationship to them? Have you spoken to them before?
5. What is the audience's attitude towards the subject matter?
6. What potential impact could the subject matter have on the audience?
7. What are the sensitive or controversial issues about the topic?

With the audience in mind, define the speech topic and why you giving the talk. What do you hope to achieve? Most importantly, why should they care enough to help you achieve the goals? **Every member of the audience wants to know "what's in it for them?"** Tell them how they stand to benefit from the attainment of the goals.

### **Goal Setting**

1. What is the speech topic?
2. What do I hope to accomplishment?
3. How does the audience benefit?
4. What do I want the audience to do?

## Steps to Speech Writing Success

1. What is the speech topic and purpose? What type of speech is it and why are you giving it?
2. Identify the main theme. The theme is more than a topic statement. It is the central point of the speech.
3. What is the goal and what do you want the audience to do?
4. Draft an outline with main points and supporting material. It may take several drafts and rewrites to express your thoughts.
5. Write the introduction and conclusion.
6. Read through the script aloud to make final decisions about flow and organization.

## B. Principles of Clear Writing

### Clarity

This is the age of information overload. Consider the proliferation of information channels and apps including: social media; e-mail; mainstream media; advertising; voice mail; scientific reports; academic research; advertising; and conversations. It is estimated that the average person is hit with 3,000 messages daily. This clutter is overwhelming and often bewildering.

Given the overload, clarity is achieved with a limited number of messages. **A speech or presentation should be condensed into three or four main points.** Three or four – no more. A ten-point agenda contributes to message confusion. The short list of points should be used to support the central theme. A narrow agenda also helps the audience retain the most important information. They are better able to remember what you want them to remember.

### Connect

A limited message agenda requires a strong editing pen. It isn't possible to say everything, so decide what fits and what doesn't. Begin the process of prioritizing by asking two fundamental questions: "Who is my audience?" And, "what do my audience members care about?" Don't attempt to talk to everyone. Trying to talk to everyone runs the risk of not talking to anyone. The message must have relevance or real meaning in the lives of the audience members.

Tailoring the message so that it revolves around what the audience cares about will help ensure that the speaker will connect with the audience in a meaningful way and goals will be achieved. In January 2015, a measles outbreak at Disneyland spread to several states. Public health official Dr. Anthony Fauci reassured parents that vaccines are safe. And, appealed to them to protect their own children and community health by ensuring all children get vaccinated. If the message does not have immediate personal utility to the listener it will be rejected as irrelevant.

### **Compelling**

Balance data with storytelling. The most effective appeals combine fact-based information illustrated with stories about how real people are impacted. Statistics lend legitimacy to an argument but are open to interpretation or competing stats. Emotions amplify an issue, making it more comprehensible.

For example, data about sexual harassment doesn't tell the whole story. A 2017 Gallop Poll found that 42 percent of American women report having experienced harassment in the workplace and 69 percent of all Americans believe it is a major problem. However, the numbers don't sufficiently convey the depth of the problem. Women coming forward with #metoo stories have illustrated the pervasiveness of the problem and the true cost in terms of personal suffering and societal damage.

### **Concise**

Less is always more. Thomas Jefferson said, "speeches measured by the hour, die by the hour." Today, most adult audiences can handle about 15-25 minutes. If a speech runs long, the speaker risks losing the audience's attention and wasting everyone's time.

Less is particularly more in the news media. Print and broadcast media want sound bite answers. The average sound bite on network TV is 7.2 seconds. Local reporters will give a little extra time – 10 to 30 seconds. Shorter responses also reduce the likelihood of being edited out of context.

### **Continual**

Repetition of the message is crucial to truly connecting with the audience. Repeating key points helps the listeners understand and remember what's important. Audience members need to hear, see, or read a message between seven and twelve times to remember it.

**Repetition helps the audience retain what is important.**

### **III. Self-Assured – Confidence and Control**

#### **A. Conquer Stage Fright**

*The Book of Lists* undertook a survey asking adults in America what they most feared. Overwhelmingly, the respondents listed the fear of speaking in public as number one. It ranked higher than the fear of spiders and snakes, even the fear of death. The physiological reaction to stage fright is called the ‘fight or flight syndrome.’ During times of high stress, the body reacts by preparing to stand and fight or take flight -- adrenaline surges, the heart rate speeds up, blood pressure increases.

These physical changes can have a devastating effect on the speaker. The face may turn red, hands sweat and tremble, knees knock, and breathing becomes short and shallow. It has been said that, “The best antidote to fear is preparation and practice.” The most accomplished orators spend a considerable amount of time writing, rewriting, and practicing their presentation before they face an audience. It is imperative to schedule plenty of time for the drafting and rehearsal of the talk.

Stage fright immediately prior to a speech can be minimized through relaxation and breathing exercises.

#### **Beforehand - Off Stage Exercises**

##### **Deep Breathing**

Rapid, shallow breathing focused in the upper chest accelerates a racing heartbeat. More effective breathing starts with the diaphragm. Take a deep breath in through the nose using the diaphragm to raise and lift the chest. Hold the breath for two or three seconds and then audibly exhale through the mouth. Repeat slowly as many times as needed.

##### **Walk it Off**

If your hands and legs feel jittery release some of the excess energy by walking. Purposefully walk down a hall way while slowly swinging your arms back and forth across your chest. Take long, even strides.

##### **Neck & Shoulder Rolls**

An enormous amount of stress can center in the neck and shoulders. Release it with loose, relaxed rolls. Drop your chin to your chest and slowly roll your head from shoulder to shoulder. Avoid rolling your head in a circle because this movement may strain the neck. Roll back and forth 180 degrees. Do this slowly.

Roll your shoulders back slowly. This movement will open and expand the chest while also releasing tension in the neck and shoulders. Repeat the rolls several times.

### **Face Squeeze**

The face squeeze looks strange so do this one in the restroom or in your office with the door closed. Scrunch up the muscles in your face squeezing them into the middle around your nose. Hold for second and then slowly relax. Open your eyes wide, hold, and release. Work the muscles in your jaw. Slowly open wide, hold, and relax. Move the jaws side-to-side. This also helps warm up the vocal cords and improve the sound of your voice.

### **On Stage Exercises**

Often times you are seated on stage prior to a presentation or panel discussion. While waiting your turn to speak tension can build even though you did the above-mentioned exercises. With some moderation, it is possible to do some of the same exercises and no one will notice.

### **Deep Breathing**

Use a slightly less exaggerated form of the breathing exercise. Take the breath in and release it slowly. Just be careful not to exhale into a microphone.

### **Body Movement**

While seated in a chair it is possible to relax nearly every muscle in your body. Push your chair back from the table a couple of inches. Lean forward from the waist slightly to stretch your back. Slowly cross and uncross your legs. While you are uncrossing your legs shift all of your body weight from one side to another.

When you have finished crossing your legs you can release more tension with simple ankles turns. Slowly, deliberately turn your ankle five times in one direction and then five times in the other direction. Then you can cross and uncross your legs again. This movement will ensure that your body stays loose and doesn't tighten up.

### **Neck & Shoulders**

Don't rest your elbows on the chair's armrest because the position causes shoulders to crunch up. Rather, allow both arms to hang loose from the shoulders at your sides. This will prevent the build up of tension. When you drop your arms sit up slightly and lower the shoulders back for more of a stretch.



## **Practice Positivity**

Positive visualization combines productive mental imagery with constructive affirmations. World class athletes use the technique to enhance their mental toughness by repeatedly visualizing themselves overcoming obstacles and competing successfully. A figure skater completes the perfect double-axle jump in her mind before she hits the ice.

The technique works by refocusing doubts and worry on proactive steps with positive outcomes. If worry takes over it can lead to a constant swirl of negative self-talk in your head. If you constantly picture bad outcomes you are going to experience corresponding bad feelings. Positive visualization helps you develop a mental blueprint of how you want the experience to play out.

A good time to use the technique is before you fall asleep. While lying in bed envision yourself in front of the audience smiling confidently. See the room and notice how everything is in place because you arrived early and got set up. Take a deep breath and exhale. Practice the opening aloud. Work your way through your main points and share a funny story that gets a chuckle. As you conclude, pause and smile to acknowledge the audience's applause. The more you use the exercise the more effective it will be.

## **Top Ten Ways to Conquer Stage Fright**

1. Schedule plenty of time to write and rehearse the speech.
2. Analyze the audience and tailor the speech to their interests.
3. Be sure you can see and read your notes or text.
4. Add delivery reminder cues to notes.
5. Be very familiar with the content but don't try to memorize it.
6. Arrive early the day of the event to get the lay of the land.
7. Test the audio/video equipment beforehand.
8. Do relaxation exercises and deep breathing to get physically set.
9. Use the power of positive thinking to calm nerves.
10. Videotape the performance for later review

## **B. Handling Questions & Answers**

The questions and answers (Q&A) session is the time for direct audience interaction. Seize the opportunity to reinforce the key message by repeating message points when responding to the questions. Repetition is essential to the audience's ability to retain the important information. Don't allow off-the-wall or hostile questions to lead the presentation astray from the central message.

The Q & A session is an excellent time to include information that was inadvertently missed during the speech. And, Q&A provides time to clarify any misconceptions or misunderstandings.

### **Set Ground Rules**

1. Advise the audience if questions will be taken during the talk or at the end.
2. Request audience members to provide their names and affiliations prior to asking a question.
3. Limit the amount of time available for questions.

### **Strategy and Tips**

1. State the ground rules prior to taking any questions.
2. If possible, move from behind the lectern.
3. Always have a prepared question to break the ice, such as, "A question often asked is..."
4. Be sure the question is understood before giving a response.
5. Address each individual with courtesy and respect.
6. Do not judge the question, "that is an excellent question."
7. Use a strategic pause - silence is an excellent technique to help maintain audience attention.
8. Maintain eye contact during the initial response to the questioner then pull in other audience members by using additional eye contact with them.
9. Keep your answers short and to the point.
10. Emphasize key points with statements such as "What's really important here is" or "The most critical point I want to make is..."
11. Bring the Q&A session to a close by saying, "I have time for one or two more questions."
12. Close with a mini-summary that includes a key message.

#### IV. Tool Kit

##### A. Sample Typed Speech Page

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a **new nation** conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that **all** men **are created equal**.

(PAUSE)

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or **any** nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

## **B. Sample Speech Outline**

### **I. Introduction**

- A. Grabber
- B. Statement of Topic
- C. Goal
- D. Benefit

### **II. Body**

- A. First Main Point
  - 1. Supporting facts/examples
  - 2. Supporting material
- B. Second Main Point
  - 1. Supporting facts/examples
  - 2. Supporting material
- C. Third Main Point (optional for short speech)
- D. Fourth Main Point (optional for short speech)

### **C. Conclusion**

- A. Summary
- B. Final Thought
- C. Call to Action

## **C. Top Tips for News Media Interviews**

1. Know who the reporter is, who they work for, and what the story angle is.
2. Ask the reporter who are their other sources.
3. Prepare three or four key message points in advance.
4. Stay on message during the interview.
5. Lead with your best soundbite.
6. Personalize the message with an anecdote.
7. Keep answers short and simple. Use words and phrases that are easy to understand and jargon free.
8. Never say “no comment.”
9. In a YouTube world you are never off-the-record.
10. Treat reporters as professionals, not enemies or friends
11. Practice on-camera beforehand and review the tape.

## **The Top Ten Trickiest Media Questions**

### **1. Hypothetical or “What if....?”**

Never respond to hypothetical questions. Stick to the facts.

### **2. “USA TODAY” or news of the day?**

Expect to be asked about breaking news even if it is not related to your topic.

### **3. Third Party or Unknown Source?**

Always be skeptical when a reporter asks for a response to a comment or statement from an outside source. It is better not to respond, stick to the facts.

### **4. Wouldn’t you Agree?**

Don’t allow the reporter to cajole you in to something you don’t agree with. Respond in a friendly, yet firm manner saying you disagree and explain why.

### **5. Ranking or Choice?**

A reporter may ask you to characterize your answer by deciding if something is better or worse or by choosing “A” or “B” or “C.” You can say none of the above.

### **6. Negative Premise?**

Don’t repeat the negative words or phrases that are often imbedded in the question.

### **7. Personal Opinion?**

Don’t ever feel like you must give a personal opinion.

### **8. Personal Attack or Cheap Shot?**

Ignore the pettiness, calmly set the record straight, and quickly bridge to message.

### **9. False Facts?**

Inadvertently, you can get a question based on faulty information. Stick to the facts.

### **10. The Softball?**

Sometimes the easy question throws you off balance. Always go straight to your message.

## **D. Books Worth Reading**

“The Well-Spoken Woman: How to Look and Sound Your Best,” Christine K. Jahnke, Prometheus Books, New York, 2011.

“The Elements of Speechwriting and Public Speaking,” Jeff Scott Cook, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1989.

“Made to Stick,” Dan and Chip Heath, Random House, New York, 2007.

“Start with Why,” Simon Sinek, Penguin Group, 2009.

“Eloquence in an Electronic Age, The Transformation of Political Speechmaking,” Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Oxford University Press, 1988. A blend of anecdote and analysis that exposes how the advent of the electronic media has transformed speechmaking.

“Our Master’s Voices,” Max Atkinson, Methuen & Co., London, 1984. Intensive research on how politicians deliver skillful messages to win voters’ hearts and minds.

“The Voice Book,” Michael McCallion, Theatre Arts Books/Routledge, 1988. For any public speaker who wants to make the most of their voice. It contains specific tips and exercises for strengthening the voice and improving intonation.

“We Shall Be Heard: Women Speakers in America,” Patricia Scileppi Kennedy & Gloria Hartmann O’Shields, 1983. Collection of speeches by leading American women.

“Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can’t Stop Talking,” Susan Cain, New York, 2013.