



Tulsa
Chapter

DID I SAY THAT?

**TEN TIPS TO GAIN CONFIDENCE
IN PUBLIC SPEAKING**

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Ten Tips to Gain Confidence in Public Speaking

People who articulate well are perceived to possess greater leadership qualities and have increased credibility. Whether you are chairing a meeting, doing a formal presentation in front of a live audience or simply expressing your viewpoint to an individual or small group --- effective speaking skills will serve you well.

TIP NO. 1: Know Your Audience

WHO are you talking to?

- What is the level of interest in the topic?
- What is important for the audience to hear, know and walk away with?

WHAT do you want your audience to take away?

- Learning, information, inspiration, action

WHY are you delivering this communication?

- To inform, instruct, persuade, entertain

HOW

- Length, method, content

TIP NO. 2: Be Prepared

- Understand your time limit – don't exceed it! In fact, stop 5 minutes early
- Mentally walk through your presentation
- Practice, practice, practice! Know your presentation material inside and out and practice until you own it.
- Rehearse!
- Rehearse with any aides you will be using
- Know the room and room set-up
- Arrive early and allow for plenty of time to set up

TIP NO. 3: Relax

When you are tense, you look nervous and that can be a distraction for your audience. Remember – most people “hear” with their eyes. Connecting to your audience can help you relax. When you make contact with your audience – by looking from one individual to another – you reach them in a way that words alone cannot. Know that your audience wants you to succeed.

A comfortable “rest position” that looks natural will make it easier for people to relate to you. When you are relaxed, you are more in control. Erect posture leads to easier breathing and better voice projection.

- Know your topic
- Be yourself
- Psyche yourself up – use positive self-talk

- Work on your body's physical reaction to nerves
- Bond with your audience

TIP NO. 4: The Magic of Three

Audiences can remember three things. Frame your content into three main points.

- Start by telling them the three things you will be talking about
- Cover your content
- Summarize your three points

TIP NO. 5: Non-verbal Gestures

Dramatic gestures can add energy to your presentation and connect you with your audience. Small gestures (below the waist if you are not standing at a podium; below your chest if you are standing at a podium) are the equivalent of mumbling and merely distract the audience and take away from your message. Too much gesturing can make you appear nervous.

TIP NO. 6: Movement

When you move around the room, you can be closer to everyone in the audience. Movement also adds a visual component, but if you are always moving you can appear tense and it can be distracting. Practice comfortable, relaxed movements between three spots – center, left and right. The key is staying long enough in each spot that you appear to be well anchored.

Move your eyes – making eye contact will make you appear more credible. Use it as a way to connect with a large number of people in your audience. To be most effective, keep someone's gaze for at least four seconds, but not longer than 8 seconds.

TIP NO. 7: Voice

Your voice is your instrument. The "music" you create communicates emotion, knowledge and adds meaning to your words.

Remember, it's not just what you say; it's how you say it.

- Project your voice – not being able to hear is a major distraction for your audience
- Use different tones – louder, softer (not too soft), up and down. Vary your tone and your volume.
- Pause – pausing is to public speaking what white space is to a written presentation: it allows the audience to rest, as well as to process what they just heard and it emphasizes the information around it – what came before and what comes after. It is very effective for holding the audience's attention. A speech without adequate pauses is like a written document that is one long paragraph.

TIP NO. 8: Closing

Closing can be the most powerful part of your presentation. Just as openers can get their attention, strong closings can make your message be a lasting one.

- Questions that challenge participants and leave them pondering a course of action
- Quotations that form the basis for a rhetorical closing question
- A personal anecdote that illustrates your key points
- An analogy that brings the main points of your presentation together

TIP NO. 9: Have a Backup Plan

- Plan for the unexpected
- Always back up your presentation on a USB drive
- Think about what can go wrong and prepare solutions in advance

TIP NO. 10: What Not to Do

- Conclude with a Q&A session - solicit questions/comments throughout
- Apologize
- Admit something was wrong – move on
- Skip the summary – leaves the audience dangling

NOW YOU TRY IT!

Tell a story which begins with "last week", or "last summer", or "when I was five" and end with "and that is why..."