

## Speak UP, Speak OUT with Confidence

### **You Are the Message**

How you deliver the presentation is important. Make eye contact with your audience, stand on two feet, relax your shoulders, keep arms open. Speak clearly and loudly. Practice tongue twisters and remember to put the beginning and endings on your words. Consonants!

The five P's of the voice: pitch, punctuation, pauses, projection, pacing. Create colorful language and use an expressive voice.

55% of our impression is visual, 38% voice, 7% verbal \*

### **Fearful to Fear . . . less**

If public speaking is the number one fear, then what can we do? Breathe. Long, slow deep breaths in and even longer going out. Use creative visualization to project yourself into the presentation. Give yourself 15 minutes of uninterrupted quiet and close your eyes. See yourself walking into the room and up to the podium. You are confident. You speak effortlessly. The audience is attentive and engaged. Creative Visualization is a proven technique for enhancing performance.

When doubtful thoughts creep in, acknowledge your fear or discomfort, and gradually affirm in the positive. "Yes, I am nervous – but I have something important to talk about." Your mind will believe what you tell it. Go slowly each time moving up the grid until you are feeling positive and confident.

Use empowered body language. Amy Cuddy, Social Psychologist at Harvard Business School, has researched the effect of the body on the mind. By changing body language, messages to the brain change. (See her TedTalk) You may want to practice standing with your hands on your hips, shoulders back, chin up, legs separated. Experiment with what makes you feel confident – then modify when giving your presentation. (You would not want to be in a Superman/woman pose during your presentation!)

### **Page to Podium**

Create an interesting introduction. Ask a question, use a quote, give a statistic, begin with a personal anecdote, are all ways to immediately engage your audience. Know exactly how you are going to begin – no reading from note cards! It is critical to be making eye contact from the get go. Neuroscientist, Drew Westin is quoted as saying, "you evolved the capacity to feel long before the way you think . . .

instead of baraging people with facts you speak to people's core feelings and concerns." So, find ways that relay important information (facts, figures, statistics) and make it accessible.

Use transitional phrases in getting from one point to the next that are new (see handout). This keeps our minds fluid. It's tiresome to hear the same words used over and over again.

Use slides to support what you are talking about. Visuals are exciting. Find ways to use slides that enhance your already stellar speaking style. DO NOT READ WORD FOR WORD OFF THE SLIDE. It is assumed that your audience can read.

How you end your presentation is equally important. Let your audience know that you are coming into the home stretch. Funny how we "wake up" when we hear things like, "in conclusion", "and finally." Summarize the main points, and again find a way to appeal to your audience emotionally. How will this information better serve the patient, doctor, researcher, humanity.

### Lighten Up

I've heard it said that laughter is the shortest distance between two people. If you fumble, it is not the end of the world. We are all human. Be willing to take a risk. There are times when we falter and being able to think on your feet is essential; acknowledge the moment and move on. Come back to your excitement about sharing this information. Play! Find ways to create mental flexibility.

### Listen

So much is said without being said. Tune into your audience. Are they restless, eager, fidgeting, bored, engaged? Paying attention to non-verbal cues is essential, this will guide you in your presentation. Do you need to slow down, re-state, move more quickly. Maybe it's time to add humor or share a relevant, meaningful story. With practice, you will know how to read your audience and get them back on board. Be willing to not know all the answers and investigate with your audience. When a question is asked that you do not know the answer to, acknowledge the questioner rather than dismiss them out of fear. It is much more exciting to think collaboratively and in this way everyone feels "heard." And finally, role play is a fantastic way to explore what is being said from another perspective and gives you practice in thinking on your feet.

Good luck . . .

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