

5 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking strikes real fear in the hearts of many folks out there and can stop them in their tracks. The problem is that whether in person or online addressing 2 people or 2000, the ability to engage the audience and deliver your message is crucial for leaders of all levels.

But what to do with all that fear?

That is the question, and I have some answers that I believe will help.

Here are my top tips for improving public speaking skills. Take them for a spin; you just might find public speaking is not so scary after all.

#1 Put Your Notes Away

That's right. Just put your notes down. One of the best ways to connect with your audience is to keep your attention on them. If you shift your focus to your notes, the audience might start to feel disconnected, thinking, "She could have just emailed me that instead of reading it to me." Ouch. You want your audience to feel like you're having a conversation with them, and typically, when you're having a conversation, you're not reading from a page, right?



You'll need to know your subject so well that you don't need notes (more on that later) but avoid scripting your speech. You don't want to be at the front of the room, head down, eyes on a page, when there's a room full of people waiting to engage with you. So, put the notes down and look at the audience. They will feel more engaged and will naturally pay more attention to what you're sharing with them, rather than simply listening to you read, which most people don't enjoy.

#2 Look Them in the Eye

In fact, take a few seconds before you even start and connect you can eye-to-eye. Don't make it weird, just make it personal: the room to connect with a few folks. *Bonus:* they'll look at you connection before a you say a single word. It's powerful stuff.

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with as many people as smile, and look around as well and feel that

#3 Put Down the Clicking Pen



This is a total pet peeve of mine but turns out a lot of people feel the same way. If you're shuffling a sheet of paper, rattling keys, or clicking a pen, guess where the audience's attention is going? Exactly! On the shuffling, clicking, rattling, etc.! Work at having nothing in front of you or in your hands and just simply delivering the message. And if you find you want to click a pen out of nervousness that you'll forget something, I've found you are more likely to do exactly that if you are diverting your own attention to the clicking.

#4 The Rule of Four 3s

You don't want to memorize your speech, but you should know your subject well as mentioned before. Give your audience an idea of what they're going to hear and what the key will be. This helps them engage and follow along, mentally checking off you move through your presentation. It also provides structure, which appreciate. Not too much detail, just enough to give them a preview of gain from the event.

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The best way to do this is to follow the **Rule of Four 3s**:

First 3: At the beginning of the presentation, have your three main points memorized. These should be big-picture ideas. It's okay to write them down for reference. Knowing your subject, these bullet points will keep you on track if needed.

Second 3: Tell the audience what those three points are. This is your outline—simple, short, and clear. People love clarity.

Third 3: Cover each of the points. Say each one out loud right before you discuss it. This acts as another mental check for the audience, keeping them engaged and connected to the material and you.

Fourth 3: At the end, summarize what you told them. Repeat the three main points in a summary, wrapping up your presentation. This helps the audience absorb the material and come away with some solid takeaways.

Following this approach will help ensure that your audience remains engaged and understands the key messages of your presentation.

#5 Just Do It Anyway.

My top public speaking tip might sound a bit unusual, but bear with me. Speaking in front of others can be intimidating, but even experienced speakers feel a tinge of fear before every speech. Their secret? **They just do it anyway**, using the phrase “so what” with their inside voice.

Fearful of people looking at you? Tell yourself, “So what.” Afraid they won’t like you? Again, “So what.” You get the idea.

By whispering a little “so what” to yourself, you can take the sting out of public speaking. Then, just move on with your presentation. Practicing this will gradually change how you process that fear. Over time, this fear can become a source of energy to engage with your audience and your topic. Eventually, when fear arises, you’ll quickly say, “so what,” and continue right along, whether you’re afraid or not.

Indie Bollman is the owner of **Indie Bollman Coaching and Consulting LLC**, which provides services to growing businesses that recognize the need to train their teams and develop new leaders. With extensive corporate experience, including executive roles such as Chief People Officer, Indie has a rich background in Organizational Development, Training and Development, and Human Resources. She has successfully established and developed exceptional leaders and teams in start-ups, ramp-ups, and turnarounds. It’s work she loves and now enjoys bringing to other businesses and leaders. She is also an established and engaging speaker, bringing humor and high energy to events and key notes for any size audience, from small group or team meetings to large conferences.

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