Advanced Stage Ready with @NickiSalcedo

Always use the mic
Always monitor your time
Always focus on the needs of the audience
Leave behind your gift
Practice, practice, practice
Boldly go!

Award speeches

One day you will win an award. Be ready. Draft a speech. Period. Time it. Three minutes maximum. Two minutes is better. You don't always have time to prepare, except you do. You can prepare now. Your speech should fit on an index card.

- Thank the organizers.
- Say what this award means to you.
- Thank no more than 3 people or groups.
- Leave the stage.

Especially if you claim to be an introvert, have a plan to get on and off the stage quickly.
Do not belittle or disparage yourself on stage. It isn't a sign of humility, but a lack of professionalism and preparedness.

Keynote

How long do they want you to speak? 15 minutes, 30 minutes. Practice and time yourself. Unless you are presenting educational content, don't plan to go longer than 30 minutes. 20 minutes is the sweet spot. Give the audience what they want, but do not bore them. Do not read your speech word for word. Say it from the heart. Think of your words as a poem. Think of your words as a song.

Interview or book talk

Work with the host to determine format and questions. Make sure you hit the key points. Hook the audience and sell books.

- What is your story about?
- Tell your writing journey.
- Why this story is unique? Why it matters?
- What do you want the readers to think about or feel? How does your story impact people?

Have your bridge statement. This is how you respond when you are asked a question that you don't feel comfortable asking.

You are interviewing another author

Stay out of the way. You're the Vanna White. You'll be memorable if you showcase the author in an intelligent and insightful way.

- Your job is to make the author look good and sell their books.
- Your job is to help the bookstore/bookseller.
- Prepare the questions and a teaser on the content of the book. Do not give away the ending or twists.
- Prepare audience questions in case you have a quiet group. If the audience has questions, help moderate.
- Have the audience use a mic or the interviewer should repeat the question.

You are the moderator of a panel or on a panel

Plan in advance by communicating with the group prior to the event. Be clear on timing for overall event and how much time each author should plan for their responses. Typically, 1 to 2 minutes. Monitor conversation flow to keep the event on time.

How to prepare your speech to connect with your audience.

Do your research. What is the vibe of the organization? Professional, academic, motivational?
Who is the audience? What level of writing or publishing experience?

How to make it memorable. How to get speaking opportunities.

Do the unexpected.
Connect on three levels: personal, intellectual, emotional.
Pay attention to other speakers, what do they do well, what they could do better.
Present workshops.
Get to know your local bookstores.
Do such a good job when you speak you get asked back.
Be ready. If they call, you should be ready. I've been asked on short notice to be on the radio, CNN, and fill in for Louis Gossett Jr!

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