

Acting Tips to Improve Your Business Presentations **15 minutes a day will increase your sales conversion rate**

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What do you think of when you think of acting? I used to think that acting was pretending, but after studying it I discovered that it's more about making the most of your every single move. It's about being fully alive, uniquely creative and connected in the moment. Isn't that what our clients are looking for? Where every action is intentional and nothing is wasted. What if we brought some acting secrets into our next business meeting or presentation?

Consider what actors do before they go on stage. They warm up their body and voice. They know that nervousness causes poor articulation and awkward body gestures. If you knew you could come across with more of George Clooney's charisma or Halle Berry's tenacity (or your preferred style/brand) would it be worth it to you to carve out 15 minutes before presenting your ideas to a potentially lucrative client?

Here's a suggestion from Gerald Lee Ratcliff in his book "Coping with Stage Fright." If you hold tension in your jaw, which a lot of us unknowingly do, you can make it easier for people to hear what you have to say, by doing these exercises.

Before you go on stage (or to a business meeting) stick your tongue out as far as possible and touch it to the tip of your nose. Now stick it out again and touch your chin. Do this a few times – you'll notice it's easier to speak with distinction. It's fun and loosens us up. Move your tongue around your lips 3 times, then counterclockwise. Exaggerate an ear-to-ear smile, pucker, frown and grimace. To relax your voice, pant heavily, sob quietly, babble incoherently, and count to 20 in one breath. Notice how your voice sounds clearer and more resonant.

As we all become more aware, it's easier to discern when something feels off or incongruent. Our clients can feel our confidence (or lack of) through our body language. They can detect any hesitation or misrepresentation in our voice. The question I frequently ask my clients is "How can you use less effort and be truer to your ideal self?"

How you say your message is important. You can say $2 + 2 = 4$ in a way that makes people fall asleep or you can say $2 + 2 = 4$ in a way that makes mathematics seem like an incredible, revolutionary way of understanding how things work in the world. We can talk about our service in a way that sounds pretty much like everyone else or in a way that wakes people up to the value of it.

Another way to increase your awareness and have your desired impact is to practice saying the same sentence through a variety of identities (a few chosen here from Gail Larsen's list of over 200 options in her book *Transformational Speaking*):

authority figure, buddy, caregiver, change agent, charmer, cheerleader, fanatic, motivator, professional, scholar, mother/father, teacher, therapist, tease, underachiever, workaholic

For example, you could say, "It's nice to meet you" playing each of the above roles and notice how your voice changes. If you want to take it one step further, notice your body posture as you take on each of these roles. Which role will bring you the most business?

We usually have two voices: what we *want* to sound like and what we *actually* sound like. Playing with these subtleties will give you more awareness and with that awareness, you might just make a different choice.

Ask yourself, "What comes first, being successful, then acting like a successful person or deliberately acting like a successful person and then becoming successful?"