

Nothing Happens Without Connection: Life After “Speaking 101”

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A juicy connection with your audience will bring you more business. Go beyond the basic speaking skills and learn irresistible intimacy. Nothing of real significance happens without it.

Sure, there's a time for a basic speech class. It's where a lot of people go to get experience in a supportive, friendly group. You can polish your presentation by working on gestures, vocal variety and organizational skills. That's a great start, but it only takes us so far.

What makes us successful in this first stage (focusing on ourselves) is the very thing that holds us back from the next level. Don't get stuck putting more efforts into one stage when it's really time to move on. Have you ever listened to a presenter who is elegant in every way, yet doesn't connect with or relate to the very people sitting in the audience? This presenter has an opportunity to extend out and dive deeper into the connection with each audience member. Couldn't we all make our face time with potential clients richer, more meaningful and more effective? Having a structure is a good starting point. Combine that with creative spontaneity and you'll discover even more potential for a lively and powerful connection.

Advanced presentation skills will take you to an expanded zone where not only are you the speaker in front of the room, you are being part of the audience as well. Listening to your audience as you're speaking creates a telepathic bond that enriches what you say in the present moment. The sense of separation dissolves and a new feeling arises almost as if the speaker and the audience are one organism. Once you experience it, you feel the power of true connection.

When Einstein and his colleagues met, they explored ideas in this field of potential. They allowed ideas to spring forth on their own. They encouraged each other and got really curious about what might be said next. It reminds me of the new slogan going around that says, “Dumb is the New Smart.” Ask more questions! Yes... there's a reason you're at the front of the room or presenting your ideas to a client, but don't let it go to your head. Bring your extensive background and combine it organically with what's happening right here, right now.

The key is connection.

Your audience is looking for it. Your clients are secretly begging for it. They want to be included. Have you ever seen a presenter who has very little eye

contact with the audience? Recently, I watched a businessperson give a well thought out Powerpoint presentation. He had all the facts and figures down, but half the audience was sleeping! He had his back to them most of the time as he read the bullet points from the screen. What a shame, I thought. He clearly had good intentions with diligent preparation, but without a connection, little was accomplished.

Nothing significant happens without a connection.

How do we allow this increasingly vital bond to happen? It begins by connecting with ourselves. Take a moment and breathe. Just breathe. Get fully in your body and let the mind chatter calm down. Feel your feet connect with the ground. Tap into the reason you're giving the speech. Do you feel genuine passion or have you become automated?

It takes much more effort to connect with others if we haven't first connected with ourselves. Once we're feeling at home in our own skin, it becomes effortless to reach out and connect with others. When we're grounded, we're more stable and people feel safe to come into our space.

Once you're connected with yourself, reach out to others. Put your attention on the person in front of you. Breathe. If you're in front of a group, put your attention on one person at a time. It's a simple step, but often overlooked. The more I coach people with this method, the more I see great ideas and solutions forming in the space between people. It's magical. In the past, a lot of us have felt like we had to do everything on our own. That's the old paradigm. This is the age of connection, growth and interdependence.

If you're feeling stressed out, chances are you've been feeling like you have to do it all on your own. Bring your skills to the table, connect with others and watch how effortless your presentations become. It's disempowering to have one-way conversations, for the listener as well as the speaker. We're all experts in some area. Use it. Share it. The point is not to become the presenter who has all the answers and speaks *at* people, but rather stepping into a larger domain with more connection and greater influence.