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# **SPEAKING AS A LEADER**

## **How To Lead Every Time You Speak**

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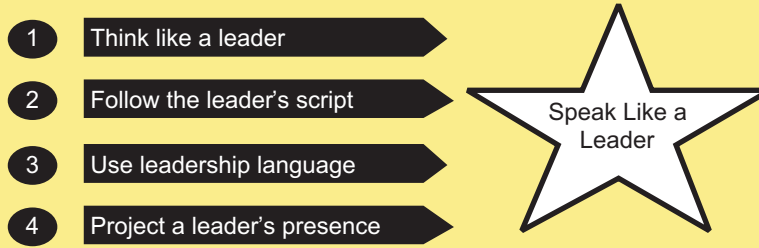
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**MAIN IDEA**

All communication is an act of leadership. To speak like a leader in all situations, the four steps are:

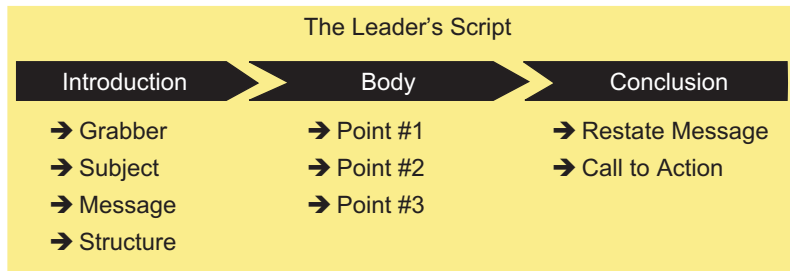


**1 Think like a leader** ..... Pages 2 - 3

To speak like a leader, you've got to be prepared to take the stage and inspire, influence and move others. Leaders see every speaking situation as an opportunity to motivate others. You need to know your audience and then have the wherewithal to inspire them rather than merely informing them. You also have to be skilled at listening and learning from others to be a good leader.

**2 Follow the leader's script** ..... Pages 3 - 5

Leaders don't just sit with people and have an aimless chat. They have a script which achieves their aims. To influence and impact those you speak with, follow the leader's script.



**3 Use leadership language** ..... Pages 6 - 7

When you're a leader, the language you use counts. Great leaders are conscious of the language they use and deliberate in their choice of words. They bring their messages to life with language that's clear, conversational, personal, eloquent and strong. If your words have these qualities, your ideas will be understood and acted on by the audience.

**4 Project a leader's presence** ..... Pages 7 - 8

To influence others, bring what you say to life by injecting energy, engaging eye contact, appropriate gestures and the right tone of voice into what you're saying. The most engaging leaders are their own best visual aids. They embody and epitomize what they're saying. If you can develop and then project a leader's presence, your influence will be felt whether you're speaking one-on-one or in front of hundreds of people.

1 Think like a leader



To speak like a leader, you've got to be prepared to take the stage and inspire, influence and move others. Leaders see every speaking situation as an opportunity to motivate others. You need to know your audience and then have the wherewithal to inspire them rather than merely informing them. You also have to be skilled at listening and learning from others to be a good leader.

Solid mental preparation is the first step in being able to speak like a leader. If you analyze the way leaders speak, there are some key characteristics they have which you will need to acquire for yourself before you can do the same.

Leaders have a vision and a mission in mind

Leaders don't just speak to pass the time with their friends. They have a vision for where their organization needs to head in the future and they then take every opportunity to describe that vision. For example, Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google says Google's vision is to: "Take all the world's information and make it accessible and useful to everyone." Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, states Facebook's vision as: "Making the world more open and connected."

When describing a vision in this way:

- Stay focused on a single mission which you can describe in one sentence. Send one message.
- Lift your listeners by inspiring and lifting. Your vision needs to be positive, not negative.
- Make sure what you're describing is attainable. If it's unrealistic, people will become demoralized.
- Your vision should be encompassing and describe what you're mandated to do.

*"Place yourself in the tradition of leaders who speak with a vision that is focused, positive, attainable, and encompassing, and let that vision shape everything you deliver. Commit to it in your speeches, presentations, meetings, and off-the-cuff comments. A vision is a living thing: if you broadcast it continually, in all your interactions, others will believe in it, act on it, and with your leadership turn your vision into a reality."*

– Judith Humphrey

Go beyond hierarchies

You won't just be called on to lead those who report to you. As you communicate, try to influence others who are above you, below you and on much the same level in the corporate hierarchy. Just keep in mind a few suggestions:

- When speaking with those who report to you, emphasize the vision so you can persuade rather than issue direct orders. If you can sell people on your vision and enlist their help rather than issuing abrupt commands from on high, that's a much better way to work. Be a leader, not a bully.
- When working with your peers, clients or suppliers, look for ways to find common ground and build a productive relationship. See the world through their eyes and then pitch your ideas around your shared goals to get their help.

- If you're attempting to work with those who are senior to you or above you in the hierarchy, the best approach is:
  - Speak with confidence tempered by respect.
  - Express your ideas directly – don't beat around the bush.
  - Always be looking for the wisest steps to take next.
  - Be bold – position yourself as an adviser.

*"Every conversation within an organization 'or outside it' is an opportunity to shape your audience's thinking, no matter what your job title or theirs. It often requires different skills to lead from above, from the side, or from below, but leaders need to be effective in all these relationships. Succeeding on these different stages isn't always easy - it requires emotional sensitivity, political intelligence, tact, and courage. But if you see every conversation as a leadership opportunity, you will soon develop the skills that you need to become a successful leader."*

– Judith Humphrey

Don't just deliver information, inspire

Many speakers end up delivering nothing more than an information dump because:

- This is considered to be a "safe" thing to do.
- Doing this can establish your stats as an "expert".
- Many corporate cultures demand information-heavy talks.
- People fear looking unprepared if they don't have slides.

This is unfortunate because in practical terms, the inspirational approach to communicating is far superior to an information dump. If you look at every speaking situation as an opportunity to inspire, you'll be getting into leadership mode. After all, leaders have a vision which transcends their current difficulties and points to the sunlit uplands which lie ahead. If you can inspire people every time they speak with you, they will keep coming back for more again and again.

*"Realize that your true power lies not in content, but in your vision. Francis Bacon may have said "Knowledge is power," but today the world is drowning in knowledge. What people need is clarity, insight, and interpretive ideas that allow us to make sense of information. If the informational approach is about showing what you know, the inspirational approach is about showing what you believe and want others to believe."*

– Judith Humphrey

Be positive and optimistic

The simple fact is if you genuinely aspire to think and speak like a leader, you can't afford to dwell on the negatives. You have to be positive to be inspiring and this applies to both your formal and your informal speaking opportunities. People will naturally seek out those who are positive and shun those who are negative – which means the more positive you are, the better you will be able to lead.

So how can you become more positive?

- Always look for the silver lining in any and all negative situations and be prepared to talk about that.
- Focus on and talk about your solutions, not the problems you're facing. Don't dwell on your problems
- Acknowledge your challenges but spend the majority of your time on the positives.
- Use positive language – "We have a challenging situation but this is a wonderful opportunity to showcase our strengths."

**Speak with conviction**

*"The most effective leaders communicate with conviction. Your vision provides direction, but your conviction shows the strength of your viewpoint. When you speak with conviction, the way you present your material says, "This is something I believe. This message is important to me . . . and should be to you." The job of a leader is to inspire people and energize them to action."*

– Judith Humphrey

Conviction comes from the inside. To show your conviction:

- *Be passionate* – people hate listening to a speaker who lacks passion for their subject. Think about what you're saying and seek to convey its importance and the results can be electrifying.
- *Be authentic* – relay to people your personal connection with what you're saying. Leave no doubt you walk the talk.
- *Be courageous* – have convictions which shine forth from what you're saying. Be willing to say the right things even in the face of opposition. This is what leaders do.
- *Be honest* – don't deceive, misrepresent or lie in whatever you're saying. By all means frame things positively so you can inspire others to follow but don't deceive.

**Be a great listener**

If you want to communicate effectively as a leader, you must be a superb listener. Listening is a prerequisite of great motivational leadership. You have to listen on three levels:

1. *Physically* – you must create openness by picking up on what people are saying rather than being preoccupied planning what you will say next. Pay attention to all the physical clues people are sending out as they speak with you.
2. *Mentally* – by all means anticipate what people are likely to be thinking in advance but then listen with an open mind to validate your conclusion. Concentrate on what they're saying and hear them out rather than rushing to judgment. Hear everything the other party is saying. Open your mind to their views and build on those views constructively.
3. *Emotionally* – be polite and sensitive to the other person's feelings. Listen with empathy to the verbal and the nonverbal responses of the people you're hoping to move.

**Commit to communicating**

While it's tempting to talk about "natural born leaders," the reality is history's most powerful leaders have deliberately and energetically worked on becoming better at their craft. To find success as a leader yourself, you must commit to work at improving how you do this as you go along.

Specifically, you must devote time and effort to create a powerful script and then practice your delivery performance over and over. Powerful speakers make it look effortless but it takes months and years of effort and fine-tuning to reach that level of competence. Get into the habit of developing your script well in advance of when you need to deliver it and then get busy reading it out loud so you get comfortable with the material and know how to make it come to life. Read it in front of your support team and get them to make suggestions for improvement. Put in the intense preparation required so that when you speak, it seems like you're a natural. That's the mark of leadership.

**2 Follow the leader's script**



Leader's don't just sit with people and have an aimless chat. They have a script which achieves their aims. To influence and impact those you speak with, follow the leader's script:

Introduction	Body	Conclusion
→ Grabber	→ Point #1	→ Restate Message
→ Subject	→ Point #2	→ Call to Action
→ Message	→ Point #3	
→ Structure		

When you speak, you don't want people to grit their teeth and merely endure your speech. You want to engage them, win them over to your way of thinking and then inspire them to act on your recommendations. The best way to achieve these goals is to follow the leader's script whenever and wherever you speak.

*"The Leader's Script is a template for designing your remarks whether you are speaking for 30 minutes or 30 seconds. It has extraordinary versatility and strength. This single model works when giving a formal speech or a presentation, responding to questions, speaking on the phone, or having a brief conversation with a colleague. You need only this one design for your scripts. You need to master only one methodology for all situations. By using this template you will always be "on message" and will influence and inspire others."*

– Judith Humphrey

The three parts of the leader's script are:

Introduction
→ Grabber
→ Subject
→ Message
→ Structure

A great Introduction should engage your audience and transform them from being passive listeners to active participants in a journey of discovery. The Introduction has four components:

1. *The grabber* – your opening and your opportunity to capture the audience's attention. If you're making a formal speech or presentation, the grabber may be a story or an anecdote that sets the stage for what you want to speak about. In an informal setting, your grabber may simply be a warm greeting or a thought which carries on from what someone else has said. Grabbers come in loads of different varieties and depending on the setting might be:
  - An amusing or heart-warming story.
  - A short but powerful video clip.
  - Quotes from well-known figures.
  - Poetry or adaptations of well-known verses.
  - Hard-hitting and startling statistics.
  - A personal experience or observation.
  - Something completely unexpected and awe-inspiring.

2. *The subject* – a concise statement of what you will be talking about. There are lots of ways to express this: “Today, I will be talking about ...” or “This presentation will review ...” or “I’d like to invite you to look at ...” Every talk should have a subject and you need to make this succinct statement of your topic exciting and engaging in some way.
3. *The message* – sets out your argument. The message encapsulates the takeaway you want people to remember in a single sentence. This is what you believe and what you’re working towards getting the audience to believe as well. As a leader, you want to leave a message every time you speak and this is your opportunity to articulate your central message. The message is your linchpin and therefore should be stated at the beginning, proven in the body and then reinforced in your conclusion. Be bold:
  - “My message is we are in financial trouble.”
  - “If there is one thing I hope you will remember, it is...”
  - “My point is ...”
4. *You end the introduction with a structural statement* – you tell people how you will be making your case as you speak to them today. This is like giving them a roadmap:
  - “I’ll start by detailing the challenge and then our response.”
  - “I say that for three main reasons.”

→ **Grabber:** Welcome. When I began working at NewCorp in my first managerial position, our company had very few minorities in senior management roles. I was mistaken for a janitor in the maintenance department more than once. Fortunately, that situation has changed over the past ten years.

→ **Subject:** Today, I want to talk to you about NewCorp’s ongoing commitment to diversity.

→ **Message:** The message I hope you will take from what I say is that NewCorp has now put in place three vital programs that will help minorities advance in our company.

→ **Structure:** I’ll start by looking at how this situation arose in the first place and then explain how NewCorp has responded to the challenge in ways which were never before imagined or attempted by a Fortune 500 company.

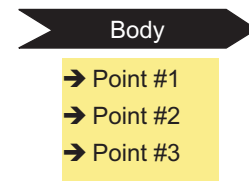
→ **Grabber:** Welcome to this analysts briefing. We’re delighted to have you with us and thank you for your interest in GoldCorp. We appreciate your efforts over the past year to get our message out to the broader investment community. We’re now pleased to share the next chapter with you.

→ **Subject:** Today, I will give you a snapshot of our results for fiscal 2013.

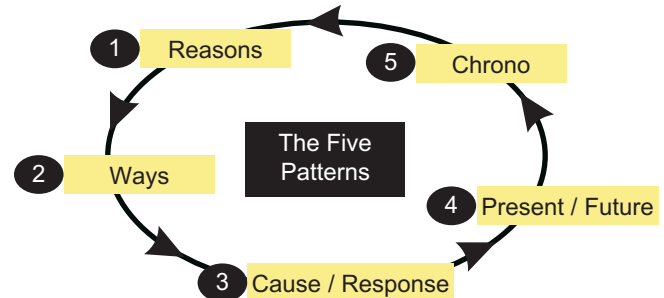
→ **Message:** The message of my presentation is GoldCorp has enjoyed extremely strong earnings thanks to rising gold prices on the world market and advances in our production techniques.

→ **Structure:** We’re convinced that Goldcorp is well positioned for further growth in 2014 and beyond. As I will be explaining, there are three rationales for that conclusion:

1. We’re in the right markets.
  2. We’ve developed a strong brand and good relationships.
  3. We have a dynamic and very capable management team.
- I will also allow time for an open question-and-answer discussion at the end of this presentation.



Once you’ve captured your listener’s attention with an engaging introduction, it’s now time to present your information in a coherent and well-organized way. There are five patterns or approaches which can provide this kind of framework for ideas:



1. *Reasons* – you can state cleanly and concisely what are the reasons why you believe what you do.

→ **Message:** I believe we have a very vibrant future.

→ **Body:** There are three reasons I say that:

1. The markets for our products are expanding.
2. We have a leadership position in our industry.
3. We are positioned to benefit from our investments.

2. *Ways* – you can detail how your message will be implemented.

→ **Message:** I learned here at Harvard how to build a life where I can do my best without losing sight of my ideals and beliefs.

→ **Body:** There are five ways to do this:

- First, commit to learn something new every day.
- Second, work hard with passion and courage.
- Third, give back to the community on a regular basis.
- Fourth, have self-confidence.
- Fifth, be optimistic at all times.

3. *Cause / Response* – you can make the case for change in an engaging way. Do this by describing the challenge or opportunity at hand and then detail the actions you’re taking to respond to that situation.

→ **Message:** The worryingly high level of customer dissatisfaction expressed in our last customer survey points to the fact we need to take bold new steps.

→ **Body:** I’ll first look at the challenge our latest customer survey has highlighted and then I’ll discuss the steps we’re taking to address these concerns. The key points:

- More than 60 percent of our customers are unhappy.
- We’ve introduced three new customer strategies.

4. *Present / Future* – you can provide your information in the form of an “update”. You begin by bringing your audience up to speed on progress thus far and then outline what you expect to take place moving forward. Contrasting “Where we’ve been” with “Where we’re heading” is frequently used in annual meetings, performance reviews, project debriefs and so on but can be applied elsewhere.

- **Message:** If we are to build on what we have achieved this past year, we need to bulk up our efforts to develop next-generation technologies.
- **Body:** I’ll first talk about how we did and then give some comments on what we must do in the future. Thanks to your efforts, we achieved splendid results last year. We now need to build on the momentum we’ve generated to make next year a period of impressive growth.

5. *Chronological* – you can emphasize and trace the unfolding of a process over time.

- **Message:** We must now demonstrate we have the vision and courage to reinvent America, the world’s longest-lived democracy.
- **Body:** Our history is one of greatness. Our founders boldly declared our independence to the world. Today, our economy remains the world’s strongest, although we face some imposing challenges. We will work towards putting an end to the deadlock so we can renew America.

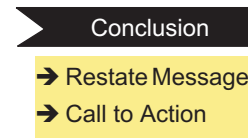
Choosing which of the five patterns to use in organizing the body of your presentation will be a matter of understanding your message, your audience and the supporting materials you have available. You figure out which pattern will best deliver your message in a persuasive manner. Keep in mind you can also use one pattern for your overall message and then another pattern to explain your individual subpoints.

*“The Body of your script should be an act of persuasion. Its role is to drive home your message. Whether you are speaking formally or off-the-cuff, the Body is your opportunity to set forth your best arguments. Master these techniques for structuring your script, and you’re well on your way to speaking like a strong leader. Your intelligence will resonate with every argument you make. And nothing is more critical to your leadership than such clear thinking. After all, ideas are the new capital of today’s organizations and this set of techniques will give you abundant currency.”*

– Judith Humphrey

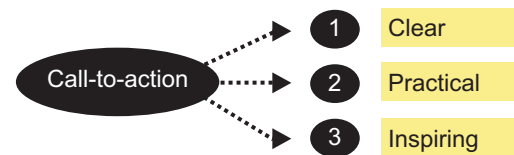
*“Audiences want to listen, but they need your help! To guide them through your structure, give them a roadmap at the outset. The last sentence of your Introduction should be a structural statement that lets your listeners know what route you (and they) will be taking through the Body of your script. If you plan to use Reasons, you might say, “Let me give you three reasons why I say that.” Or in the case of Ways, you might say, “There are four ways we’re addressing that need.” If you are speaking off-the-cuff, you may not know how many points you’ll be making, so simply say, “We are doing several things to achieve this goal.”*

– Judith Humphrey



To conclude your presentation, you simply:

- Restate your message or the central idea you’ve been trying to make. Your aim here is to make the listener feel like they own the message. “So, as you have seen, we are on course at the present time to deliver an exceptional performance in the next quarter.”
- Issue a definitive call-to-action. This will tell your audience what they need to do in order to turn your message into reality. A good call-to-action will leave no doubt about the specific actions you want people to take.



Think of your call-to-action as being the rallying cry of your presentation. Effective calls-to-action have three qualities:

1. *Make it clear* – leave an unmistakable request hanging in the air. “This budget will enable us to achieve our financial targets for the year so I ask you to approve it.”
2. *Make it practical* – mold a call-to-action which is appropriate to your current circumstances. “I’m asking you to accept that there will be quantifiable advantages if we appoint an exclusive dealer for this region and therefore this should become our firm’s policy.”
3. *Make it inspiring* – “NewCorp is well on its way to becoming a truly global company. As we move forward, we look forward to working together as a tight-knit management team. I’m asking that we spend the time and effort to mold a world-class team who can drive this enterprise forward.”

*“The next time you prepare a presentation, make a phone call, or write an e-mail, ask yourself, “What do I want to happen?” Write that down first, and keep it in mind when you plan the rest of your remarks. Follow the guidelines in this chapter and your speeches, presentations, e-mails, and meeting comments will inspire people to follow your direction. Each act of speaking will become an act of leadership.”*

– Judith Humphrey

*“We both [Harry and William] think of her every day. We speak about her and laugh together at all the memories. But put simply, she made us, and so many other people, happy. May this be the way that she is remembered.”*

– Prince Harry speaking at a tribute on the 10th anniversary of the death of his mother Diana, Princess of Wales

*“We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”*

– Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address

3

Use leadership language



When you're a leader, the language you use counts. Great leaders are conscious of the language they use and deliberate in their choice of words. They bring their messages to life with language that's clear, conversational, personal, eloquent and strong. If your words have these qualities, your ideas will be understood and acted on by the audience.

#### Speak with clarity

The best way to get your audience to understand you is to think before you speak and then ensure you're always on message in what you're saying. If you're precise and succinct, listeners will appreciate the fact you know enough to take something complex and make it understandable. People like working with leaders who are direct and honest in what they say and this is what you're aiming for.

Speaking with clarity also involves using language which is appropriate for your audience. Know your audience, watch for signals they're getting what you're saying and be careful in your choice of words. Speak with precision.

#### Skip the jargon

*"Jargon is the bane of business, government, and professional organizations. It consists of lazy language, inflated terminology, and phrases that get repeated so often they lose their meaning. Identify all forms of jargon, and edit them out of your text."*

– Judith Humphrey

The jargon which can creep into business talks include:

- *Abstract words or expressions which take up space but essentially mean nothing* – like “parabolic arches that form the main shielding elements over the playing area.” You're better off talking about the “roof.”
- *Big words* – like “metropolis” rather than “city.” In a similar vein, “weather” comes across much better than “meteorological.” Many speakers think big words make them sound smarter but they have the opposite effect.
- *Buzzwords* – like “strategize”, “paradigm” or “multi-decked structure.” To cut down on buzzwords, start by eliminating pretty much any word which ends with “ize” and you'll be heading in the right direction.
- *Cliches* – such as “ballpark figure”, “bottom line”, “operational parameters” or a “viable alternative”. Why would anyone want to consider an option which is not viable?
- *Strange clusters* – which seemed to have been formed merely by sticking a number of nouns together. “Challenge” sounds much better than “Specified project outcome requirement.” What is an “Operational Integrity Management System”?
- *Acronyms* – like BMO for Bank of Montreal or HP for Hewlett-Packard. They require people to stop listening to your message and instead figure out what is meant. That's not helpful.

Avoid all of these different types of jargon and your communications will be better.

#### Be conversational

Outside of church, people generally don't like being made to feel like they're being preached at or talked down to. If you adopt a conversational tone instead, you'll come across as being far more authentic and relevant. The best way to think of any speech, presentation or other speaking opportunity is to view it as an opportunity to strike up a good conversation with the audience.

With that in mind:

- Use short simple sentences rather than trying to use big words and long sentences.
- Use familiar words. Plain words are great.
- Include some familiar informal expressions – like “Now, don't expect this to happen overnight, but it will happen.” Or “We want to bring people closer together, simplify their lives, and better serve them.”

#### Be personal

Get personal with your audience and you'll always come across as more persuasive: Some suggestions:

- *Showcase your personal convictions* – talk about “I believe...” and “I'm convinced....” This is your opportunity to show your leadership credentials in an appealing way.
- *Engage your audience* – by using “you” in what you're saying. Referring to your audience in the first person will engage them and invite them to act on what you're suggesting.
- *Create a connection with your audience* – by talking about what “we” can achieve by working together. “We're committed to seeing this project through to a successful conclusion” can be a powerful rallying call.

#### Be eloquent

One of the most quoted examples of eloquence from a public speaker came from President John F. Kennedy's line: “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Eloquence in speech generally comes from the use of five figures of speech:

1. *Metaphors* – where you link dissimilar items. The “Iron Curtain” of the Cold War era was a good example. White House press secretary Mike McCurry was well known for saying “I'm double-parked in a no-comment zone!”
2. *Antithesis* – where you link two opposites. Eduardo Saverin, co-founder of Facebook, used antithesis well when he said: “Intellectual capital, and not just monetary capital, will spawn the next great product or idea. Entrepreneurs, especially in the technology sector, will create things tomorrow we can barely imagine today.”
3. *Alliteration* – where the same sound is repeated for impact. Jack Welch used: “Speed, Simplicity and Self-confidence” as his formula to transform General Electric.
4. *Repetition* – the repetitive use of key words or phrases. Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous speech which had multiple uses of “I have a dream” is a great example.
5. *Rhetorical questions* – questions you ask without expecting an answer. When Steve Jobs launched the iPhone, he asked his audience “An iPod, a phone and an internet communicator. Are you getting it? This is one device.”

Be decisive

Weak language dilutes the impact of leadership. If you want to lead and inspire others, be decisive. Don't be tentative. To make this happen:

- Avoid qualifiers – “It’s only my opinion.”
- Eliminate modifiers – like “Hopefully we’ll do this or that.”
- Don’t use wiggle words – like “roughly”, “kind of”, “probably.”
- Avoid fillers – like “um”, “ah”, “to be honest”, “you know”, etc.
- Delete weak verbs – such as “I think” or “I would guess.”
- Don’t apologize – “I’m sorry to trouble you but ...”
- Don’t self-correct – “I think from my perspective I said ...”
- End strongly – avoid “et cetera” and “that kind of thing.”

Leaders have strong language patterns and don't undermine their authority by saying wishy-washy things and you need to do the same. If you use words and phrases which are strong and dynamic, you will project a strong and dynamic image and people will be more likely to follow you.

Be smart about numbers

There are six techniques you can use as a leader to make any numbers you use in a presentation more vibrant and dynamic:

1. *Round 'em off* – say “70% of our users come back every day” rather than “we get 12,135,231 site visits each day.”
2. *Use fewer numbers* – don't lose your audience in figure after figure. Reduce the figures you use to a bare minimum and provide a worthwhile frame of reference. “Sales are up and are very strong this year. Our pre-tax revenues of \$19 million are a record and we'll do even better this year.”
3. *Use analogies* – relate your numbers to everyday items. “ATM technology has had the impact of turning a two-lane country road into an eight-lane expressway without building any new roads.”
4. *Create a context* – which shows why the numbers are meaningful. “IBM has been a sales leader for 100 years – at least three- to four-times longer than any other technology company. This is a clear differentiator for us.”
5. *Give numbers a human face* – so they're easier to grasp. “Refugees are not numbers, even though there are millions worldwide. They're not even just refugees. They're mothers, daughters, fathers, sons, farmers, teachers, engineers.”
6. *Define your terms* – clarify your units of measure. “GE is on a quest for Six Sigma quality levels – which means going from 35,000 defects per million operations (the average for most companies) to fewer than four defects per million in every process this company engages in every day.”

Forget the jokes

Pure and simple leaders don't use jokes. They can backfire too easily by unintentionally insulting individuals or groups. Remember your goal as a leader is always to persuade rather than entertain and if people start viewing you as a “jokester”, they won't take your message seriously. By all means use wit, quotation and humorous anecdotes if they relate directly to what you're saying to bring what you're saying to life but stay away from the jokes. They're minefields which can backfire without a moment's notice. Stay with what you do best. Leadership doesn't mix with telling jokes.

4

Project a leader's presence



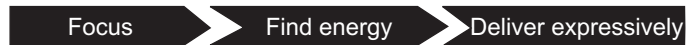
To influence others, bring what you say to life by injecting energy, engaging eye contact, appropriate gestures and the right tone of voice into what you're saying. The most engaging leaders are their own best visual aids. They embody and epitomize what they're saying. If you can develop and then project a leader's presence, your influence will be felt whether you're speaking one-on-one or in front of hundreds of people.

.....  
*“Speaking from the heart, to the heart, directly, not too complicated, relatively brief sentences, words that are clear to everyone.”*

– Theodore C. Sorensen, John F. Kennedy's speech writer and biographer

Whenever you speak as a leader, your aim should be to energize your audience so they will act upon your ideas. This is what leaders do. You should be aiming to influence and inspire whether you're speaking one-to-one or to thousands at a time. You've got to act like the microphone is always on and the camera is always pointed at you because today more than ever before, it is.

To really bring your script to life:



- *Focus on your audience* – know what challenges they're facing and engage their hearts and minds. You must be able to answer the question “What's in this for my audience?” They aren't there to be bored. They want to be moved and motivated so that's what should guide your preparations.
- *Find the energy in your script* – which means nothing more or less than structuring your presentation professionally:
  - Grab the audience's attention with an engaging and immersive introduction.
  - Have a strong central message you can deliver with passion and conviction.
  - Expand your key arguments and provide vivid imagery with each element of your message you expand on.
  - Have a single takeaway you reaffirm over and over throughout your presentation.
  - End with a definitive rallying cry in your call to action.
- *Deliver your message expressively* – pause frequently and then raise your voice when you want to emphasize key statements or phrases. This will only be feasible if you practice delivering your message in advance. In just the same way as actors don't get in front of the cameras and then start figuring out what to do, you need to practice beforehand if you're to have any hope of injecting personal energy and drama into your presentation.

*“In the end, tapping into your energy is the foundation of great delivery. Being able to open up to an audience, draw upon your “inner life,” and share it with your audience is what will make you an exceptional speaker. Once you are willing to do that, once you are willing to be open, vulnerable, and real, your audience will see you as their leader. They will follow you. Such leadership not*

only characterizes successful corporate and organizational leaders, but it is also evident in artists, poets, conductors, entrepreneurs, athletes, anyone who can release that inner energy and passion.”

– Judith Humphrey

Great speakers rarely if ever use visual aids. They have the potential to distract. Instead, you have to become the best possible visual aid for the message you’re trying to deliver. Since your ultimate aim in making a presentation is to persuade your listeners to act, you have the greatest chance of success if they can look into your eyes and feel the depth of your conviction without being distracted by anything else.

“The best way to persuade your listeners is to become the focal point of their attention. Presenters often use PowerPoint or other visual aids, believing that their audience can absorb more of their talk if they listen and look. But that’s not the case. When speakers use visuals, they create competition for the audience’s attention. The audience must divide its focus looking at the visual and listening to you. And because the eye is a much more powerful sensory device than the ear, the eye wins. Your visuals get star billing: what you are saying finishes a distant second in the audience’s mind.”

– Judith Humphrey

The three keys to embodying your message or becoming the most effective visual aid for your message are:



- **Lead with your eyes** – have strong eye contact with those you aspire to lead or persuade. Good eye contact establishes a relationship with the audience and helps them concentrate on what you’re saying. If you are forced to read from a prepared script, use the UP-DOWN-UP technique to make strong and natural eye contact with the audience:

- Look UP at the beginning of each sentence.
- Then look DOWN at your materials.
- When you come to the end of the sentence, look UP again.

A good variation of UP-DOWN-UP is if you’re speaking from notes, you can establish good eye contact by looking down at your notes to read the next bullet point and then look up and speak that thought to the audience. After you’ve delivered the material looking up, you then look back at your notes for the next point. This is particularly important when going through a PowerPoint presentation – make certain everyone comes away with the impression you’re speaking with them and establishing a strong relationship rather than being regarded as someone who is narrating the slides.

Strong eye contact is also important when you’re speaking off-the-cuff. Use strong eye contact to send the right messages. Effective leaders have animated eyes.

- **Use great body language** – which in practical terms means you want to be authentic and open rather than closed and stilted. Whether you’re seated or standing, your body language must project your stature as a leader. If standing, plant your feet solidly and avoid swaying. Stand tall as you speak about the issues at hand and use gestures to emphasize your key points. When seated, sit tall and leaning slightly forward. Make sure you look at people square on rather than tilting your head to one side or another. Be expressive but at the same time comfortable with silence when that is appropriate.
- **Have an authentic voice** – project your vocal energy in a way which compels the audience to listen. Leaders speak with expression as opposed to a monotone. Above all else, speak clearly and loudly. Make certain everyone knows your thoughts on a subject. You can achieve this by:
  - Seizing the opportunity to speak and inject your thoughts whenever and wherever an opening arises.
  - Breathing freely, even when in a pressure situation. Just the act of breathing deeply will help offset any fears you may have about making your thoughts heard.
  - Speaking loud enough so people can hear you.
  - Articulating clearly so you can use the full vocal range which is available to you.

The simple dynamic is you should utilize every speaking situation which arises as a leadership moment. Your mindset should be: “I will work to influence and inspire every audience I am in front of – large or small.”

“Every day you have dozens of opportunities to make believers out of your colleagues, your peers, and your staff. You are always on stage. Every talk, presentation, e-mail, and voice mail is a chance to lead. It’s an opportunity to persuade and inspire your audience. Too often people think that leadership is played out only on grand, public stages. It’s not. It must also be played out when we’re in conversation, on the phone, in meetings, and in elevators. Otherwise, we’ll miss these frequent opportunities to lead every day, every hour, every moment. In fact, increasingly your biggest leadership opportunities may well come on these small stages.”

– Judith Humphrey

“The one point in which we have our very greatest advantage over the brute creation is that we hold converse one with another, and can reproduce our thoughts in word. Who therefore would not rightly admire this faculty, and deem it his [and her] duty to exert himself to the utmost in this field?”

– Cicero, Roman statesman

“You have it within you to be great. Just remember that every time you speak, you can make believers out of your listeners. This is not a sidebar to your leadership. It is the very essence of your leadership. If you want to lead, accept this role. Seize this opportunity whenever you can. Realize that you have the power to create believers.”

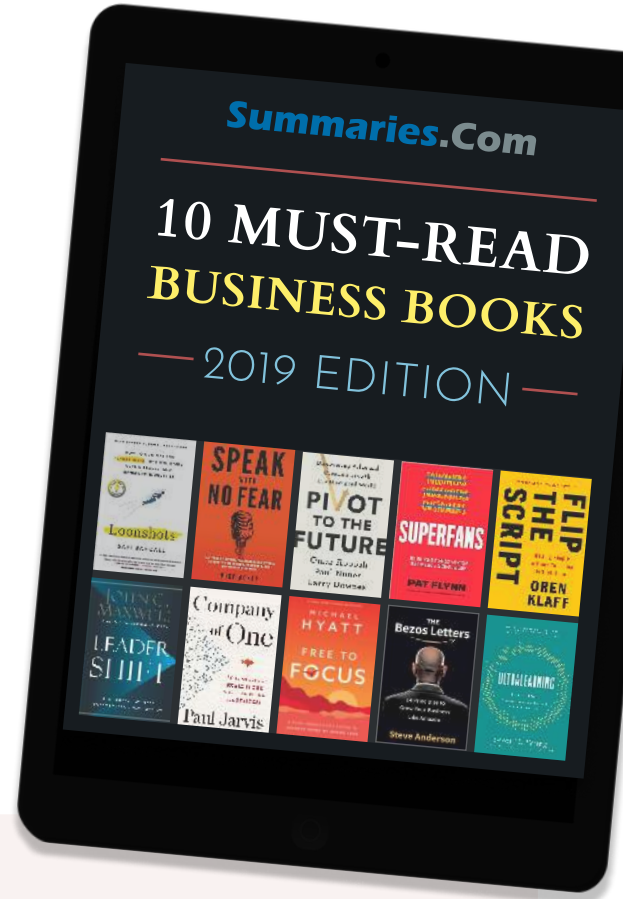
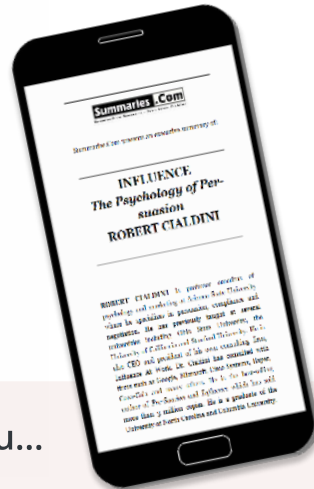
– Judith Humphrey

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