

of knowledge—no matter how small or trivial—will provide a springboard from which you can begin your research.

## Library Resources

The library might not be your first choice for exciting places to visit on a Friday evening, but it does serve as one of the most rewarding sources of speech information. Every library, regardless of size, usually provides sources of information such as those below that you will find helpful in researching your speech.

The library's *computer* or *card catalog* indexes all of the library's information by author, title, and subject. This catalog is your primary guide to the books in the library. If you are unfamiliar with its operation, ask the librarian on duty for assistance.

*Magazines* and *periodicals* are another source of information for your speech. The *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* will be your most valuable resource for locating magazine and periodical articles that are related to your speech topic. The advantage of magazine or periodical information is that it is generally more current than information in books and encyclopedias. The *Reader's Guide* indexes the articles of more than 130 U.S. journals on a wide range of topics. In addition, you may wish to consult other indexes such as the *Education Index* for topics related to education or the *Index to Behavioral Sciences and Humanities*.

*Quotation books* provide another rich source of information for your speech. *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, a reference book containing more than 1,500 pages of quotations on every topic imaginable, is one of the most popular collections of quotations. One-third of the book is an index to help you find a suitable quotation on just about any topic. Your library should have a copy of *Bartlett's*, along with several other similar reference works. A quotation often provides an ideal beginning or ending to your speech.

Your library should have one or two of your local daily *newspaper indexes*, in addition to the *New York Times Index*. Although newspapers don't always provide the most scholarly writing on a given topic, the articles can be a source of recent and local information for your speech. After you've taken a look around your local library and maybe even talked with a librarian, you can now turn your efforts to electronic resources in your search for speech topic material.

## Electronic Resources

Having ready access to the Internet from home, school, and cell phone, you might be tempted to begin your speech research with search engines such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing, but this approach can often decrease your effectiveness in gathering relevant information. By using these popular Internet search engines, you can easily become overwhelmed by the sheer number of websites generated, the biased and false information presented, and the number of reputable sources that are excluded or overlooked. That's why it's usually a good idea to begin your speech research with your college, school, or local library's database.

**Library Database.** To begin your search of electronic resources, use your library's database or portal, such as ProQuest, EBSCOhost, or InfoTrac. These are

commercial databases containing sources of information that have been selected and edited by experts to provide quality research material. ProQuest provides indexes and archives of hundreds of sources of information such as newspapers, periodicals, and dissertations. Its contains more than 125 billion digital pages. EBSCOhost provides more than 300 full-text and secondary databases, which include full-text journals, magazines, books, monographs, reports, and other publication sources. InfoTrack College Edition offers more than 20 million articles from nearly 6,000 reputable sources, with articles added daily. No matter which commercial database your school, college, or local library offers, you can be certain that the sources of information are selected and edited by experts and the material you collect from them is credible.

**Virtual Libraries.** From the convenience of your own computer, you can access a rich collection of informational sources from virtual libraries. With the click of your mouse, you can enter into these Internet libraries and browse their collections of books, periodicals, magazines, journals, directories, and newspapers. Here are four of the more comprehensive virtual libraries: Virtual Library ([www.vlib.org](http://www.vlib.org)), Internet Public Library ([www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)), Digital Librarian ([www.digital-librarian.com](http://www.digital-librarian.com)), and the Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov/rr/index.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/index.html)). Even if you don't have a topic to research, these virtual libraries are fun to explore from the comfort of your own home.

**The Internet.** After you have searched your library's database and toured a virtual library for your speech topic research, you can also access a broader-based collection of information sources on the Internet using web search engines. A search engine is designed to search for information on the World Wide Web and presents its results as a list of web pages, information sources, images, open directories, and a variety of other different types of files. There are a number of helpful search engines available to you, but remember that no search engine will find all of the available sites that are on the Internet, and many search engines allow business sites to purchase top 10 rankings on their search results. Unlike your library's commercial database, a search engine's information results are not screened, selected, and edited by experts, and so it can occasionally list biased, misleading, or false information. Here are a some of the best search engines available:

- Google ([google.com](http://google.com))
- Bing ([bing.com](http://bing.com))
- Alta Vista ([altavista.com](http://altavista.com))
- HotBot ([hotbot.com](http://hotbot.com))
- Lycos ([lycos.com](http://lycos.com))
- Yahoo ([yahoo.com](http://yahoo.com))

**Key-Word Search Guidelines.** Your Internet researching will be more effective if you follow some simple guidelines. First, avoid using general or vague subject terms when you search for information. Terms such as "car," "love," and "disease" will result in far too many hits from your commercial database or search engine. Using Google's search engine, the term "car" results in 941,000,000 hits, which is much more than you can skim in an hour.

Second, use specific terms in searching for supporting speech material. Instead of using the term "car," try the more specific key word that relates to your speech topic such as "Porsche," which results in 81,400,000 hits. An even more specific term, such as "Boxster," gives us only 3,200,000 hits, eliminating all those millions of web pages that don't contain information related to your speech topic, Porsche Boxster. How's that for a time-saving suggestion?

Third, use Boolean operators to increase your search effectiveness. Boolean operators are words or symbols placed between the key words of your topic search, such as AND, OR, NOT, +, and -. These words and symbols can narrow or expand your key-word searches. Use AND to narrow your topic search. "Boxster AND engine" eliminates all those web pages that don't contain information about both the Boxster and engine. You can expand your search by allowing results that contain alternative terms by using OR between words. "Boxster OR Carrera" will result in web pages that contain either the Boxster or Carrera models of Porsche. NOT restricts your search by excluding certain terms or words, such as "Boxster NOT Carrera." This restrictive search will give you web pages that contain Boxster but not Carrera. Finally, + and - placed directly in front of your key word indicates the inclusion or exclusion of that term, such as "+engine -Carrera."

Fourth, you can use your Help pull-down menu or Advanced Search button on your search engine to access more advanced filters or search criteria. In addition to many of the Boolean operator functions listed in the preceding paragraph, you can narrow your search by language, file type, domain ranking, region, copyright usage, results per page, numeric rankings, and so on. The more you can narrow your search, the more effective your electronic research will become. Think small.

**Evaluating Electronic Source Material.** Now that you've begun searching electronic source material for your speech, here are three criteria you can use when selecting information. First, is the author of the web article or document clearly identified? Is he or she an expert in the field? Are his or her credentials and qualifications provided? Second, many documents on the Internet are published by organizations, rather than specific authors, so you must evaluate the credibility of the particular business, agency, or interest group whose article you are considering. And finally, you must take into account the timeliness of the document you are evaluating. A good rule of thumb is to

*Education is not a  
handful of facts, but  
knowing how and where  
to find them.*  
—HERBERT SPENCER

consider only those articles that have been published in the past three years. If any web article fails one of these criteria, don't use it. There are too many other more credible and reliable documents from which to choose.

## Interviewing

The final source of speech information we will discuss is the *interviewing* of experts. Although many speakers are reluctant to ask for an interview from a local expert, the rewards of doing so can go beyond those of simply giving a well-researched speech. Many a friendship, both professional and personal, and many a job have blossomed because of a 15-minute interview.

For a given speech, don't interview more than one or two experts, because the interview process involves more time and effort than you might imagine.

The first step in conducting an interview is to decide with *whom* you want to talk. If your speech is about sleeping pills, you may want to speak with a pharmacist or a physician. If your topic is automobile engine repair, you may want to talk with an auto mechanic who specializes in engine overhauling. Or if your speech is on the planet Jupiter, you may want to interview an astronomy instructor at a local college or university.

The second step is to *request an interview*. Whether you request an interview in person, over the telephone, or in a formal letter, keep your request brief and friendly. Let the person know who you are, that you are researching a topic for a speech in his or her field of expertise, and that you would like a 15-minute interview at his or her convenience (not yours). If the person cannot or will not grant an interview, thank him or her for the time and try the next candidate. If he or she agrees to the interview, great!

The third step is to write a list of *questions* for the interview itself. This should be done only *after* you have researched the topic from your own knowledge and experience and have conducted your library search for material. This prior research will enable you to ask more enlightened, specific, and articulate questions.

The fourth step is the *interview itself*. Be punctual. Nothing is more annoying to your interviewee than for you to arrive late to a meeting that you requested. Dress up for the interview. Don't arrive in a tank top and old jeans. Show some respect. And stick to your time limit of 15 minutes. You can cover a lot of territory in that period of time, so long as you stick to the task at hand. Bring your list of questions and a pen to jot down noteworthy remarks. At the end, thank the interviewee.

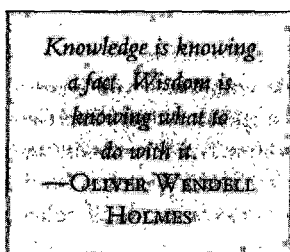
Finally, after you've returned from the interview, take a moment to write a brief *thank-you card or letter* to the person you interviewed. The few minutes and the cost of the stamp will add that touch of class that few interviewers ever consider.

### 5.3 How to Record Your Speech Information

Now that you have a better idea of what to look for and where to look for it, let's briefly discuss how to record the information you will be using.

In your research, you will find a variety of examples, quotations, statistics, and comparisons that you will want to collect. You may not use all of the information, and you may not even know the order in which you will present it. So, you will have to find some way of recording all these data. People have used everything from professional calligraphy paper to the clean side of a McDonald's hamburger wrapper to record their speech information.

The best material to use for recording your information is the 4 × 6-inch index card. You can purchase a pack of 50 cards at any office supplies store or drug or stationery store for a couple of dollars. Index cards are recommended because sorting and rearranging your material is much easier when each piece of information is recorded on a separate index card, as opposed to one large sheet of paper.



When recording your research material on the index card, write the author's name on the upper left-hand side, followed by the title of the book, magazine, newspaper, periodical, or website address. Also include the date of the publication. For information from the Internet, indicate the most recent update of the article being presented.

If you are using information from an interview you have conducted, give the interviewee's name and professional background and the date of the interview.

Your documented information (statistic or quotation) can now be written in the middle of the card. A finished note card should look something like this:

Randy Fujishin  
*Natural Bridges*, 2011.

"You either enlarge or diminish others with every interaction."

How much information should you research for your speech? A helpful rule of thumb is to gather about three times the actual amount of evidence you will present. For a six-minute speech, you would devote two minutes of actual speaking time to your documented evidence—statistics, expert testimony, and quotations. So, given the "three times rule," you would want to gather enough evidence to fill six minutes of speaking time, knowing you will select only two minutes of material for the actual speech. It's always a good idea to gather more information than you'll need so you can choose the most relevant evidence for your particular audience.

Regarding the number of sources you should consult, present at least three different sources of information. Three is the minimum. Fewer than that would not ensure sufficient depth or breadth of research.

A final word of caution would be to begin your research as soon as possible. Most people tend to procrastinate and let things slide to the last minute. But tardiness in your research will only increase your anxiety and wreak havoc on your sleep. Don't wait until the night before you are scheduled to speak to begin your research. That will only make you old before your time.

## **5.4** Helping the Audience Understand Your Evidence

It's been said that "People don't care how much you know. They want to know that you care." In many respects, this holds true for your audience when it comes to presenting evidence in your speeches.

Though it is necessary to present an adequate amount of evidence in your speeches, don't overdo it. Include only the most informative and compelling evidence

you could find, but not all of the data you collected. Remember: you're not competing in a debate tournament; instead, you're giving an informative or persuasive speech to an interested audience. So invest some effort into the way you present your evidence.

Your audience will be more receptive to and more likely retain your evidence if it is presented in a way that's easy to follow and understand. To accomplish this goal, you can use the "Evidence Three-Step" technique. These simple three steps for presenting a piece of evidence will help your audience understand and remember the testimony or statistic. Let's look at this technique.

## Evidence Three-Step

**Step 1:** Cite the source.

**Step 2:** State the evidence.

**Step 3:** Restate the evidence.

### Step 1: Cite the Source

The first step is to cite or document the evidence you are presenting. You want to establish the credibility of your information first so that your audience will be more receptive and willing to consider the evidence. State the author's name, the source, and any other pertinent background information you feel will be helpful.

"According to Randy Fujishin in his book, *Natural Bridges*, . . ."

"Dr. Vijai Sharma, in his Mind Publications blog, states that . . ."

### Step 2: State the Evidence

The second step is to state the evidence. Keep your evidence short and to the point. There's no need to go on and on with expert testimony or statistics. It's more difficult for you to remember, and you run the risk of losing your audience's attention. Keep it short. Restrict your expert testimony to 20 words or less if possible. You can memorize a brief quotation, and note cards won't be necessary. Here are examples of a short quotation and a brief statistic.

"You either enlarge or diminish others with your communication."

"Over 90% of people report some degree of stage fright when they face the prospects of a public performance."

### Step 3: Restate the Evidence

The final step is to restate the evidence *in your own words*. The purpose of this third step is to provide the evidence in words that your audience will understand and appreciate. Often, evidence is stated in technical or specialized language, which can be difficult for your audience to grasp. Your goal is to bring the expert testimony or statistic to a level that every member of your audience can understand and appreciate. So restate your evidence in simple language. This will show that you care about your audience. Here are two examples of restatement.

"*In other words*, the author is saying that every time you interact with another person, you either make that person feel a little better or worse than they felt before they talked with you."

"Another way of understanding Dr. Sharma's statistic is that in this class of 30 students, 27 of us will experience some level of stage fright or anxiety as we prepare for our first speech."

Now let's look at one example using the entire "Evidence Three-Step" technique:

"(1) According to Randy Fujishin in his book, *Natural Bridges*, (2) "You either enlarge or diminish others with your communication." (3) *In other words*, the author is saying that every time you interact with another person, you either make that person feel a little better or worse than they felt before they talked with you."

When you restate the expert testimony or statistic in your own words, the audience will more clearly understand and appreciate your evidence. More important, they will know that you cared enough to go that extra step.

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## COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

### PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

#### 1. What happened on the day you were born?

Have you ever wondered what was going on the day you entered the world? Here's a fun research project. Go to the library and look up a *New York Times* newspaper published on the date you were born (month, day, and year). You may have to go into the back of the library and use the microfilm machine, but be of good cheer. It will be well worth your efforts. Who says research is boring?

#### 2. Whom do you trust?

Make a list of three magazines, newspapers, or other publications you trust in terms of the reliability of their information and reporting. Would you have listed these three publications 10 years ago? How about 10 years from now? What publications would you not accept as being reliable or truthful?

#### 3. Whom would you have dinner with?

If you could interview (over dinner) anyone (either living or dead) for three hours, who would it be? That's any human being who has ever lived or is now living! Why did you select this individual? Would you have interviewed him or her 10 years ago if you were given this fantasy choice? How about 10 years from now? What do you think you would learn during the interview?

### CLASS ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Your dream home speech

Take a moment and pretend you have just inherited \$5 million. You can live anywhere in the world. Where would you choose to live? Pick a specific location (for example, the city of Hilo, Hawaii, as opposed to "somewhere in the Pacific"). Once you've decided on a specific place, go to the library and see if you can locate three sources of information on your dream home location. After reading about this place, does it still hold its appeal? What did you learn about this place? What did you learn about yourself? Prepare, practice, and present a three- to five-minute speech discussing three interesting facts or facets about this dream location. Your speech should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**2. Overcoming-my-fear speech**

There's a good chance at this very moment, in the back of your mind somewhere, that you're fearful or worried about something. It might be a small lump on your neck, the possibility of a relationship breakup, or anxiety over being late on a credit card payment. No matter what your fear or worry is, make a research project out of it. Think of one or two people you could talk to or interview who are experts, or at least experienced, in your area of concern. Whom did you interview? What did you learn about your fear? What actions can you take to eliminate, decrease, or accept this fear? Prepare, practice, and present a three- to five-minute speech about three insights you discovered about this fear. Your speech should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**3. Intercultural speech**

Select a culture, other than your own, that you would like to learn more about. Research at least three written sources, and interview one individual from the culture you selected. Prepare, practice, and deliver a three- to five-minute speech presenting three interesting facts you learned about this culture. Your speech should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.



# LISTENING TO OTHERS BEING GOOD TO THE SPEAKER

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**After reading this chapter, you should be able to:**

- 6.1** Explain the listening process
- 6.2** List some barriers to listening
- 6.3** Explain some bridges to listening
- 6.4** List some benefits of listening

Who would have thought that a public speaking course could improve one's love life? But that's exactly what Nikkil discovered even before he delivered his final speech.

Nikkil enrolled in an evening public speaking class to advance his career as a software engineer. He also thought it might help him with his English, since he and his young family had immigrated to the United States only a few years ago. But Nikkil soon discovered that public speaking offered other benefits he never dreamed possible.

One night after his children were asleep, his wife, Misha, surprised him by saying, "Nikkil, I've noticed that you don't interrupt the kids as much as you used to. And I think you're a lot more open to what I have to say too."

"It's funny," he said. "But I think my speech class has changed me. My instructor says that the greatest gift we give to one another is to listen with respect and an open mind."

"I like that," smiled his wife.

"I've also learned to follow a speaker's ideas, test the reasoning, and analyze the content of a speech, but it all begins with respect and an open mind."

"Well, whatever you're learning, it's made a difference in our relationship," Misha said as she hugged her husband.

"I think so too."

Who would have thought?

One of the most important skills you will learn in a public speaking class has little to do with what you say or how you say it, but rather, how you listen. Now, you might be thinking, "I already know how to listen." But this assumption might not be true. In fact, very few of us have ever been taught to listen effectively.

From your childhood, your assumption was most likely that you knew how to listen—you were born with the skill to listen, just as you were born with the ability to cry and eventually babble out a string of words to the delight of your parents. This assumption was reinforced by important people in your life. After impressing your parents with your speaking skills, it wasn't long before they were shouting, "Haven't you been listening to me?" Your teacher would be ordering you to "Listen up!" And a friend was soon complaining, "You need to listen to me for a change." Each of these statements or questions assumed that you actually knew how to listen. But in reality, very few of us did.

Both as a speaker and as an audience member, effective listening is critical to your success and enjoyment of public speaking. So let's begin by looking at the basics of the listening process.

*No one can develop fully  
without feeling understood  
by at least one person.*  
—PAUL TOURNIER

## 6.1 The Listening Process

In our daily lives, we spend more time listening than we do speaking, reading, or writing. Of all the communication skills, listening is the one we use most often. Studies show that we spend 45 percent of our communication time listening and only 30 percent speaking, 16 percent reading, and 9 percent writing. And not too surprisingly, studies also suggest that we remember only a fraction of what we hear. Listening is important, and we don't do it very well. So how can we improve our listening?

Let's begin by defining listening. *Listening* is the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli. In other words, it's the process of making sense out of the sounds we hear. This process can be better understood by examining the five steps of listening: receiving, attending to, interpreting, evaluating, and responding.

### Receiving

The first step in the listening process is that of *receiving* or hearing sounds from the environment. Hearing is limited to the physiological process of receiving and processing these sounds. At any given moment, you can be hearing the words of a speaker delivering a speech, the hum of the air conditioner, the muffled whispers of the people around you, and the rumblings of your own stomach. All of these sounds and more are bombarding your ears at the same time, all competing for your attention.

### Attending To

The second step is selecting or *attending to* primarily one of the sounds from the many you are receiving and disregarding or filtering out all the others. For instance, you might choose to focus your attention on the words of the speaker in class and filter out the sounds of people whispering, the rattle of the air conditioning, and even the rumblings of your stomach. Listening requires, as does life, that we choose from the many and focus on

*Take a tip from  
nature: your ears aren't  
made to shut, but  
your mouth is.*  
—MALCOLM FORBES

the few. Whether it is objects, possessions, goals, friends, or a spouse, you must choose from the many. The purpose of life is not to attend to everything, but only those few things that you find meaningful.

## Interpreting

Once you've selected the focus of your attention, the third step in the listening process is *interpreting* or assigning meaning to the sounds you've selected. When listening to a speaker, you must determine the meaning of the words or encode what the speaker is attempting to communicate in the speech. In addition to the actual words themselves, you will also weigh the speaker's verbal cues, such as tone of voice, vocal variety, and rate of speech. Interpretation will also involve your sense of sight and considering the nonverbal behavior of the speaker. All of these considerations are necessary for effective message interpretation.

## Evaluating

The fourth step of listening is *evaluating* the message you have heard. Not only are you required to understand what the speaker is attempting to communicate, but you must also think about the message in more critical terms that include evaluating the reasoning used, the accuracy of the information given, and the credibility of the evidence presented. Listening is more than just understanding what the speaker has said; it involves the evaluation of the speech content as well. This evaluation process can also involve judging the qualifications and credibility of the speaker. Did the speaker sound and appear honest, sincere, and trustworthy? This fourth step in the listening process is often the most difficult to learn and develop, but it's essential to becoming an effective and responsible listener.

## Responding

The final step in the listening process is *responding* to what you have heard. You might not always agree with or accept what the speaker is saying, but you can communicate that you are listening and understand what is being said. Eye contact, smiling, and nodding can communicate interest, encouragement, and agreement. Frowning, shaking your head from side to side, or long glances at your watch can convey disagreement or boredom.

You can also respond to the speaker's message by asking questions at the conclusion of a speech, engaging in a discussion with the speaker after the event is over, or even following the speaker's invitation to enroll in a class, donate to a political party, or volunteer at a charitable organization. One of the most significant responses you can have to any speech is to remember the message after the applause has finished. Since the vast majority of what you hear is soon forgotten, a message that is remembered, perhaps for a lifetime, is a successful message indeed.

## 6.2 Barriers to Listening

Listening is a difficult process, especially given the requirements placed upon the listener in the public speaking setting. Here are several common barriers to listening in this setting.

## Abundance of Messages

The first barrier to listening is the abundance of messages that bombard us every day—messages crying out to be heard, such as sounds from your iPod, your cell phone, television, conversations, business meetings, phone messages, phone conversations, and the list goes on. There are just too many things to listen to even when we're listening to a speaker giving a presentation.

## External Noise

External noise or interference from outside sources is the second barrier to listening. Some examples of external noise are traffic, barking dogs, machinery, and the music from our neighbor's stereo. These external noises make listening difficult. In the public speaking class, external noises can come from other students whispering next to you, a loud air conditioning fan, or people talking right outside the classroom windows.

## Rapid Thought

The third barrier we experience is rapid thought. We can understand an individual's speech up to 500 words per minute, while the average person speaks approximately 125 words per minute. With all of this spare time on our hands, our thoughts can drift; we can think about our response to what is being said or just daydream. Our rapid thought can be a barrier to listening.

## Judgmental Frame of Reference

We often have a judgmental frame of reference when it comes to listening to others. Questions that flood our minds as we listen to others are focused on our evaluations of what is being shared. Does this subject interest me? How does this affect me? Do I agree with what is being said? In public speaking, this judgmental frame of reference can be a barrier to effective listening because it can easily make us tune out the words of the speaker if we are uninterested in, disagree with, or don't like the topic he or she is presenting. This is one of the most common barriers to effective listening.

## Short Attention Span

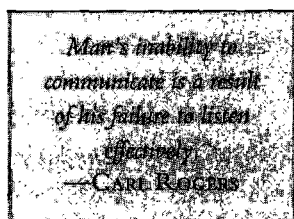
Another common barrier to effective listening is a short attention span. In addition to devoting less attention to topics we find uninteresting, disagreeable, or distasteful, we are also conditioned to expect and respond to rapidly changing messages provided by our technology. The cell phone, especially with text messaging, is a tool that permits and encourages an endless barrage of rapid-fire exchanges from a variety of individuals from the moment we get up until the moment we sleep. Instant messaging, e-mail, and chat rooms also make your computer, laptop, or smartphone another example of technology that enables lightning-quick interaction and exchanges of messages. Even television helps reduce our short attention span by its endless split-second cuts between the actions and conversations of those who entertain us:

These miracles of technology keep us connected and entertained in ways that were inconceivable just decades ago. But there is a price for this never-ending

connection, and that price might be our inability and unwillingness to simply sit still for a few minutes and listen to another human being speak without feeling the desire to tap out a message or shout out a response. This ability to sit still and simply give someone our undivided attention is becoming a rare skill in this ever-changing world of ours.

## Effort

The final barrier to effective listening is that listening requires effort. As you learned earlier in this chapter, effective listening requires that you invest effort in five specific tasks—receiving, attending to, interpreting, evaluating, and responding to the speaker's message. Each one of these factors demands that you place your attention and



energy into these important undertakings and put aside other competing needs and desires. It's often easier to drift off and think about those activities you'd prefer to be doing or people you'd rather be with, or maybe just zone out and drift into a comfortable nothingness. But as an audience member, you have a responsibility to choose to be present, attentive, receptive, and responsive. All of these activities require your effort. But remember that

your efforts to listen can increase your knowledge, widen your scope of understanding, and bless the speaker in ways you can't begin to imagine. You don't learn anything new when you're talking. But when you're listening—really listening—your life can change for the better. It's worth the effort.

## 6.3 Bridges to Listening

As we've seen, there are many barriers to effective listening. But there are actions you can take to improve your listening skills and actually bridge the gaps and shortcomings that would normally prevent you and the speaker from connecting in a meaningful way. Let's now turn our attention to building bridges to successful listening.

### Prepare to Listen

The first thing you can do to be an effective listener is to prepare to listen before the speaker even begins to talk. If you know the topic of the speech ahead of time, you might want to briefly research the topic. Nothing big or in depth, but enough to know the basics of the topic. This is where the Internet is helpful. Just Google the topic and scan the web articles for basic information that you find helpful or interesting. It's surprising how much you can learn about a topic with just a few minutes of research. Your preparation in this area can also benefit you in following, analyzing, and even discussing the presentation after the speaker has concluded.

Another way you can prepare to listen is to arrive at the auditorium or classroom early so you can find a seat in the front. The closer you are, the easier it will be to hear and see the speaker. Avoid the back and the sides of the room, since noise and activity from outside the room through windows and open doors can

Your first goal is to discover the specific purpose or theme of the speech. Usually the speaker will state the specific purpose in the introduction of the speech. The title of the speech often provides the central idea or purpose of the presentation. Whether the specific purpose is clearly stated or implicit in the body of the speech, your goal as a listener is to ask yourself the question, "What is the central idea or specific purpose of this speech?" This should be your focus of attention, especially during the introduction of the speech.

Once you've identified the specific purpose, you should try to recognize the main points of the speech. These are the three or four main ideas or reasons the speaker uses to develop the body of the speech in an attempt to inform or persuade the audience. The main points are usually previewed in the introduction and reviewed in the conclusion. In the body of the speech, the speaker might also identify each main point by stating transitions that are clearly pointed out or numbered. For instance, the speaker might say, "Now my second point is . . .," or "The third reason is . . ." Numbered transitions make the identification of main points easy.

In the event that there are no clearly stated transitions, you can ask yourself questions such as, "What am I supposed to know, think, or do because I listened to this speech?" "What are the main categories of information the speaker is presenting?" or "What are the main reasons the speaker is providing?" You can also ask, "What supporting material or information is the speaker giving for each point?" to discover details and examples that develop the speech.

## Recognize Nonverbal Cues

You will listen more effectively if you attend to the nonverbal cues of the speaker, because the messages given by the speaker can be communicated as much by the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, and body movement as by the words themselves. In fact, many times we tend to rely more on the nonverbal cues of the speaker than the verbal content when we interpret the communication of others. The speaker's nonverbal cues should match and reinforce her verbal communication. If the speaker is telling her audience that they'll enjoy volunteering as a Big Sister, her tone of voice and facial expressions should reinforce her words. She should be smiling and speaking with enthusiasm and conviction. But if she's speaking with a frown on her face and in a monotone voice, you might question her sincerity and conviction. A speaker's nonverbal cues will provide important information that you must interpret and weigh as you listen.

## Take Notes

Another important way you can build a bridge to better listening is to take notes on the speech. Note taking can be an active way to become more involved in the listening process. Here are some guidelines for effective note taking.

First, limit your note taking to only the important points of a speech, such as the specific purpose, main and subpoints, and significant or interesting details of the speech. Don't feel obligated to write down every word of the speech. Second, use your own words. Don't get hung up on trying to get the exact wording or phrasing. Paraphrase and summarize what you think the speaker is attempting to communicate. You'll recall the information more readily if you write it down in your own words.

Third, use some form of outlining or bullet point organization when taking notes. Use one word or short phrases for the bullet or outline points. It saves time when writing and is visually easier to comprehend and recall when reviewing your notes later. Fourth, if you fall behind in your note taking, skip a few lines and resume taking notes on what the speaker is currently saying. You can always go back and fill in the missing information if you can remember it. If not, don't worry. You can't remember everything. But it's important to follow the speaker and not get left behind. Just the main points, remember? You don't want to spend your entire time as a listener with your head buried in your notebook. Enjoy the speech. See the speaker. Pay attention and show your support and appreciation by maintaining eye contact, smiling, and nodding your head in acknowledgment every once in a while. There's more to life than taking notes.

### Identify Personal Benefits

The final way you can become a more effective listener is to be personally invested in the speech. That is, ask yourself questions such as "How can this speech topic make me a better person?" "How will this speech improve my life?" or "How can I use this speech to be beneficial to others?" Fundamental questions such as these will enable you to become more involved in the speech and in the speaker, because you will frame the event as an opportunity for self-improvement and improving the lives of others. This might be the highest calling of every speaker—to make this life and this world just a little better because of an attempt to communicate a message of significance to the audiences. And as an audience member, your highest calling might be to discover how any speech might make you a better person.

*The most basic  
of all human needs  
is the need to be  
understood.*

—KARL MENNINGER

## 6.4 The Benefits of Listening

Now that we've examined the process of listening, let's explore some of the benefits of listening that you will experience in the public speaking classroom. Some of these benefits include learning about new topics, appreciating others, evaluating speeches, becoming a better speaker, and being good to others.

### Learning about New Topics

One of the most obvious benefits of listening in a public speaking course is learning about a vast array of topics that will be presented by the other students in the class. Not only will you be given the opportunity to share topics that interest you, but 20 to 30 other people will be given the same opportunity to share their interests and passions as well. In a sense, it's like attending a wonderful potluck meal every time your public speaking class has speeches, getting a taste of what other folks like to cook up and enjoy in their lives. The topics will surprise, fascinate, and even inspire you. Their speeches might make you cheer, shed a tear, and maybe even motivate you to try an

activity you would never have dreamed of doing just minutes before. To live a good life, we need to continue to learn new things and venture forth boldly as we get older. So keep an open mind and heart to the topics presented by others. They just might be some of the finest gifts you'll receive during this season of your life.

## Appreciating Others

Not only will you be given the opportunity to learn about new topics, you also will be given the chance to meet and appreciate new people. You might not have thought about this benefit when you enrolled in your public speaking course. Most likely, you were focused on the uncertainty and anxiety you imagined such a class might arouse in you. Yet one of the most surprising and deeply pleasing benefits of listening to other people share their interests and passions is the appreciation, camaraderie, and even friendly affection you will experience toward many of the other speakers in class.

## Evaluating Speeches

Your ability to critically evaluate speeches is another benefit you will receive from listening to speeches. That doesn't mean you'll become mean spirited and criticize every speaker who delivers a speech. Instead, you will be able to examine and analyze the reasoning, information, and evidence presented in a speech. It's one thing to know if you're bored or engaged, or persuaded or unconvinced as you listen to a speech. But it's quite another thing to know the reasons a speech held your attention or motivated you to action. Your ability to know what to look for and how to analyze what is being said will give you the knowledge and confidence that your responses to speeches are based on more than just your emotional reactions to the speaker's delivery. Instead, your responses will be based on the critical evaluation of sound reasoning, reliable information, and trustworthy evidence. This ability to effectively evaluate what you hear will serve you well for the rest of your life.

## Becoming a Better Speaker

Not only will you learn about new topics, have a greater appreciation for other people, and sharpen your analytical skills, but you will also become a better speaker yourself by listening to other speakers. Paying careful attention to the delivery, content, and organization presented by the other students in

*There are no gifted or  
ungifted. There are only  
those who give and those  
who withhold.*

—MARTIN BUBER

class will enable you to incorporate these same strengths into your own speaking. We become better skateboarders by skateboarding with those who are more skilled than us. We become better tennis players by playing tennis with those who can show us a thing or two. The same holds true for public speaking. Just by watching more skilled and talented speakers, we are influenced, encouraged, and even inspired to do better ourselves. That's why it's usually a good idea to spend time with friends whose character and faith you admire, whose generosity and warmth you appreciate, and whose maturity and trustworthiness you respect. You become like those you associate with over time, so select your friends



carefully. In their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, you could be catching glimpses into your own future.

## Being Good to Others

Just as a speaker can have an effect upon the audience, the audience, in turn, can influence the speaker. This fact is one of the most important lessons an audience member can learn. As a listener, you can make a difference in how the speaker feels about his presentation and even how he feels about himself long after the speech has ended. You can be good to the speaker.

You might not think of yourself as having a great deal of influence over a speaker when you're sitting in the audience. But you certainly do. If you doubt your power to influence the speaker, try smiling really big the next time you catch the eye of the speaker and see what happens. Flash your smile four or five times during the speaker's presentation and see the result. Most likely, you'll get an almost confused smile from the speaker in return. You might even get a smile of appreciation, especially if the rest of the audience isn't being supportive or responsive.

Another way you can have a positive influence on a speaker is to offer verbal and nonverbal encouragement before she goes up to speak. If you're sitting next to the speaker, you can pat her on the shoulder when she gets up to speak or give her the "thumbs up" sign if she's seated farther away. You can always say something positive and encouraging if you're within speaking range, such as "Do a great job!" or "You'll do fine!" as the speaker approaches the podium.

You can also be good to the speaker after the speech has been delivered. As the speaker returns to her seat, you can say, "I loved your speech!" or "You did a fine job!" It's also an encouragement to shake her hand or pat her on the back if she's taking her seat next to you. As an audience member, you can be good to a speaker before, during, and after the speech. Most of the time, the audience politely listens to each speaker and offers mild applause, but you can offer more. You can be good to any speaker by choosing to invest extra effort to acknowledge, encourage, and cheer the speaker on. Many listeners regard their role of an audience member as passive and receptive, but you can enlarge the role of the listener to include acknowledgment, support, and even inspiration to the speaker. You can choose to be good to others.

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## COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

### PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

#### 1. **Effective listeners you know**

On a sheet of paper, identify three individuals whom you consider effective listeners—people who withhold evaluation and let you share your ideas and emotions. List specific behaviors that each person has demonstrated. If possible, thank each of the individuals for his or her positive contribution to your life.

#### 2. **Communicating in other cultures**

Ask an individual from a different cultural background about his or her listening behaviors and attitudes. How do these behaviors and attitudes differ from your

own? How are they similar? How did you feel about communicating with a person from a different cultural background about his or her listening behaviors and beliefs?

### 3. **Seeing your communication improvements**

On a sheet of paper, list three specific ways you can improve your listening. How do you feel about each behavior? How can each improvement change your impact on the speakers you will listen to in the future?

## CLASS ACTIVITIES

### 1. **Reporting audience behavior**

Have one student stand in front of the class and simply report verbally what the audience is doing at the moment. Observations such as, "I see you smile," "I see you nodding your head," and "I hear you laughing" will make the student aware of the audience without having to memorize a speech or be concerned about effective delivery. The purpose of the activity is to encourage the speaker to pay attention to the audience. Have five students volunteer to stand and report audience behaviors for only 60 seconds each. As a class, discuss your thoughts and feelings about this activity.

### 2. **Cheering on the speaker**

Have one student stand in front of the class and give a short 60-second impromptu speech about one achievement he or she has experienced. As the speaker talks, have the audience spontaneously cheer, clap, or shout something positive to the speaker. Have five different students volunteer for this activity. As a class, discuss your thoughts and feelings about this activity.

### 3. **Listening to a loved one**

Take your mother, father, or friend out for dessert (you buy of course) and ask questions about life, love, and their pursuit of happiness during this lifetime. The goal of the time together is for you to be a good listener. Focus your attention on listening, not telling your own story. Paraphrase important points and keep the focus on the speaker. Remember, you're the listener. What was it like to focus your efforts and energy on listening to someone you love? What was his or her response to your improved listening?

# DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH BEING YOURSELF

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**After reading this chapter, you should be able to:**

- 7.1** Explain three characteristics of good delivery
- 7.2** Summarize the elements of good delivery
- 7.3** Explain some guidelines for speech practice
- 7.4** Discuss the speaker evaluation list of questions
- 7.5** Explain the concept of delivery between speeches
- 7.6** Identify seven ways to use social media to increase delivery effectiveness
- 7.7** Explain how to take the opportunity to view your speech

Mike enrolled in a public speaking course during his first semester at the University of California at Santa Barbara. As a freshman, he was surprised to discover that the majority of students in the class were seniors who had avoided the public speaking course until their final year of college.

There was one senior in the class named Ron, who spoke with authority. Mike would sit mesmerized by the sound of this voice. Ron would stand behind the podium, almost motionless, with only the slightest twist of the wrist or a subtle tilting of his head to accentuate a point or ease the audience into his next thought. What confidence! What command! Mike now had a role model for speaking.

As he practiced his third speech of the course, Mike spent hours trying to lower his voice to match Ron's deep, resonant musical notes. As he practiced his talk, his body wanted to dance, as it had during the first two speeches, but Mike restricted his movements, so he could match Ron's subtle and almost aloof gestures and posturing. As he practiced, Mike became more and more excited. His practice was paying off. He was speaking and moving just like Ron. It was working.

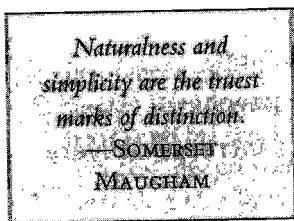
Mike's third speech, however, was a bomb. He didn't really know what had happened that morning in class when he got up to speak. His voice was deep like Ron's. His posture was motionless like Ron's. And his gestures were as subtle as any Ron had presented. In fact, Mike felt like he was Ron! But something wasn't right.

It wasn't until after class that Michelle, one of the other students, came up to Mike in the hallway and said, "I liked the 'friendly' Mike more." That's all she had to say. Michelle liked the "friendly" Mike more. She liked the old Mike, and not his imitation of Ron.

Mike took Michelle's comment to heart, and two weeks later he delivered his next speech in a more relaxed and conversational tone of voice. He talked and moved naturally. He was being himself and not acting like somebody else. And it felt right. This was one of the most important lessons Mike learned in his public speaking class—to be himself by speaking naturally.

## 7.1 Characteristics of Good Delivery

The content of your speech is what you say. Delivery is how you say it. Delivery is the overall "who" that you present to the audience, not the "what" that you say. Delivery is more than just the volume, rate, and pitch of your voice and the way you enunciate words. It includes your appearance, posture, body movement, hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions. In other words, *delivery is all of the nonverbal communication you express to your audience when you speak.*



The adage "It's not what you say, but how you say it" merits serious reflection, especially in light of current research. Studies have shown that nonverbal communication has a greater impact than verbal communication when we receive and interpret messages. One such study asserts that only 7 percent of our emotional response to another person is determined by the verbal component of what is said, whereas 93 percent of our response is

shaped by the speaker's nonverbal behavior!

What does this mean to you as a public speaker? Obviously, it suggests plenty. The most thoroughly researched and well-organized speech will have little impact on an audience if the speaker's delivery lacks a conversational quality, a desire to communicate, and speaker naturalness.

### Enlarged Conversational Quality

The majority of impressive professional speakers you have observed in person or heard on radio or television were speakers who probably sounded more like formal orators whose voices boomed rather than whispered, whose gestures painted grandiose scenes, and whose bodies illustrated every phrase. Often, these speakers were addressing large audiences, and such delivery might have been appropriate for the occasion. But for our public speaking purposes, the most effective speaking style is an enlarged conversational quality.

An *enlarged conversational quality* of speaking means talking with the same naturalness and quality of voice you would use when speaking with another person, only enlarged just a little. To do this, you increase the volume of your conversational tone of voice so people in the back of the room can hear you, and you expand your gestures and movements a bit so all the audience can see them. The primary goal of

using an enlarged conversational quality is that your audience will get the feeling that you are talking to them in a natural fashion, not talking at them with calculated and rehearsed gestures.

How can you speak with an enlarged conversational quality when your body stiffens, your hands freeze, and your voice tightens even at the thought of addressing an audience? The most useful way to achieve this enlarged conversational quality while planning and practicing your speech is to imagine that you are talking to just *one* person.

See this person in your mind's eye as you prepare the wording of your outline and practice the delivery of your talk. Try practicing your speech with the mental image of someone you feel safe with. You don't need a photograph of the individual, only the mental image. If you can do this successfully, you will begin to acquire the correct conversational tone.

## Desire to Communicate

It's been referred to as "speaker directness," "speaker presence," "focus," "love for the audience," and "immediacy." We'll simply refer to it as the speaker's *desire to communicate*. This desire to communicate is the feeling the audience senses when a speaker really wants to be there sharing her message. The audience knows the speaker really desires to communicate with them. She wants to be there, and not somewhere else. The speaker is not forced to talk; she wants to talk.

With this desire to communicate, the speaker also communicates an awareness of and a sensitivity to her audience. The speaker's eyes are focused on the audience, not on her notes. She is aware of the audience's feedback and is sensitive to their responses. They get the sense that she sees them, feels them, and is with them in body and spirit.

This sounds like a description of the behavior of someone who loves you—the immediacy, the focus, the concern, and the sensitivity. No, you're not required to fall in love with your audience; however, you are encouraged to forget yourself and focus your attention, your thinking, and your energy on being there with your audience and showing your desire to communicate with them.

Ideally, you are a speaker who wants to be there sharing with the audience. They may soon forget most of your words, but they will remember you and your desire to communicate.

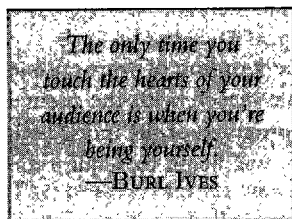
## Speaker Naturalness

There's an old Jewish proverb that wisely asks the question, "If you can't be yourself, who can you be?" A common and disturbing problem that prevents us from living a free and healthy life is our inclination to try to act, think, and be like someone else—awkward attempts to be someone we are not. Granted, imitation is one of the basic tools in learning, whether for language acquisition or writing style. But as a template for living, it can be hazardous.

When Mike was trying to imitate Ron, he was uncomfortable and awkward. For 18 years, Mike had spoken like Mike. He had talked and behaved in a manner that was natural for him and no one else. Mike was comfortable with the way he

communicated. His voice may not have been as deep as Ron's, but it was friendly and warm. His gestures may not have been as smooth as Ron's, but they were expressive. And his body movement wasn't as controlled as Ron's, but it showed his enthusiasm and desire to communicate.

Over the years, Mike has improved the quality of his voice, the smoothness of his gestures, and the movement of his body. And so will you. But Mike is fundamentally the same speaker he was back then. The big difference now is that Mike has come to appreciate and develop his own natural speaking style. He isn't trying to be someone else. And neither should you.



No one else in the world speaks exactly as you do. And no one else in the world feels, acts, or thinks exactly as you do either. Your individuality is what makes you, you. That's what makes life so stimulating and excit-

ing—the differences, not the similarities. Perhaps your individuality or naturalness is the most “precious possession” you can share with another person.

As you speak to your audience, let them see the real you. Don't hide behind the voice of someone else. Don't disguise the rhythms of your gestures. And don't conceal your body's true dance. The audience has you for only a few minutes of their lives; let them hear the real you, not someone else.

“If you can't be yourself, who can you be?”

## 7.2 Elements of Good Delivery

Now that we've examined the three characteristics of good delivery, we can look at its specific elements. Those elements include your body, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, breathing, and vocal characteristics.

### Body

Your body communicates a great deal about you to others. The first thing your audience will notice about you is your overall appearance as you step up to the podium or take center stage. Your appearance in terms of dress and grooming will have a significant impact on an audience.

A speaker's attire can enhance or detract from the effectiveness of the presentation. Somewhat formal dress can often increase a speaker's credibility with an audience, whereas flamboyant, shabby, or enticing attire can actually distract, annoy, and even anger the audience. You don't necessarily have to suit up in a tux or evening gown, but you should carefully and thoughtfully consider the audience and the occasion and dress accordingly.

Grooming should also be an important consideration when preparing for your talk. A hot shower and just a splash of cologne or perfume will not only enhance your appearance but also make you feel better about yourself.

Once you're up there at the podium, your audience will check out your overall posture. Before you begin speaking, *pause at least three seconds to center your weight evenly on your two feet*. Don't lean on one foot more than the other. Equal weight, that's what

we want here. And your feet should not be spread more than shoulder's width. A little less would be fine. Keep your back straight, and square your shoulders to the audience. Don't aim a shoulder at the audience—square those shoulders.

Let your hands hang at your sides freely as you take your three-second pause before speaking. A common error made by novice speakers is that they don't pause and get set before speaking. They simply run up and begin talking nervously even before they reach the podium. That sends a loud message to the audience. It says the speaker is nervous, anxious, and literally out of control. Take those three seconds to center yourself. It will pay off for the remainder of your talk.

When an individual faces an audience, the normal response is to freeze—not move. But a rigid, motionless delivery style would be monotonous to watch for even a short period of time, and it will only serve to make you, the speaker, more tense and nervous. *Body movement* has been shown to attract the attention of an audience. You don't need to do cartwheels across the stage or backflips off the podium, but there are some body movements that are helpful in sustaining audience interest and emphasizing important points.

Speaking of podiums, try moving away and speaking from the side of the podium to communicate a more informal speaking style. This more informal and natural speaking style is beneficial in most speaking situations. If the audience can hear your voice without the use of the podium microphone, step away from the podium when you're speaking. This will give you more room for body movement and gestures.

You might also find it useful to walk two or three short steps to your right or left when you state a main-point transition or stress an important phrase in your talk. This is called *walking into your points*. This walking movement recaptures the audience's attention and visually reinforces the transition from one point to another. Walk slowly when you do this. Don't rush. Stroll slowly into your next point.

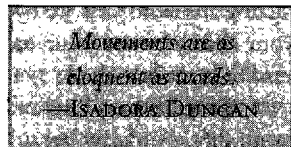
If you want to get more intimate with your audience, walk a few steps in their direction. Be careful not to fall off the stage, but stroll toward the audience. This movement works really well when you're giving the punch line to a joke or the climactic ending to a story. You can do just the opposite—that is, walk away from the audience—when you want to voice strong emotion. Just a few steps back is all you need.

A final word on body movement. Too much movement, unrelated movement, or repetitious movement can distract an audience. Use your body movement to direct attention and emphasize points during your talk. Use it carefully.

## Gestures

Your *gestures* consist of your hand and arm movements during your speech. Use gestures to emphasize and express important ideas and emotions. The normal tendency for a beginning speaker, when facing an audience, is to cement her hands to the sides of the podium, clutch her hands either in front or in back of herself, or freeze them at her sides. This too can only serve to increase the speaker's anxiety. There are two excellent practice techniques you can use to loosen up your hands and arms.

The first one we'll call the *silent hula technique*. Just as a Hawaiian hula dancer does, you can practice



communicating passages or sections of your speech *without words*, using only your hands and arms to express the thoughts and feelings. It sounds silly, but it gets your mind off the words of the speech and refocuses your attention on your gestures. You'll be pleasantly surprised at how your hands come alive once you forget about the words and concentrate on the message.

The second technique for loosening up your hands and arms is called *catching rain*. Catching rain is exactly what it sounds like. Stand with both hands comfortably outstretched in front of you, with your palms up and your elbows at your sides. Then begin to recite your speech. The only rule with this practice technique is that your hands and arms cannot fall beneath your waist. As you speak, you will notice your arms will begin to move by themselves as you talk! It's like they have a life all their own. Small movements at first, but then more pronounced as you get into your talk. Who knows why it works. But once your mind is occupied with your mental chatter, it forgets about the hands and arms, and the body takes over. Sounds weird. But give it a try.

## Eye Contact

The manner in which eye-contact behavior is interpreted varies from culture to culture. But in U.S. culture, you are expected to have direct eye contact if you are to be perceived as interested, honest, and credible. If not, you run the risk of being seen as uninterested, reticent, or even devious. When you speak to an audience, this principle holds true also.

Direct eye contact with your audience serves a variety of positive functions for the speaker. First, it establishes contact with the audience. How can a relationship be established if you don't even see them? Second, eye contact holds the attention of the audience. You don't need to look into the eyes of every one of your audience members to keep their attention, but spread your eye contact around the room. Look at the front, the back, and the sides. Don't get stuck on one section of the room. Avoid looking at your notes, the floor, or the ceiling. Third, eye contact is the best way to receive feedback from the audience. Do they look bored? Are they interested? Are they confused? All of these questions can be answered quickly and silently by glancing around the room. Finally, eye contact suggests honesty. The adage, "A person won't look you in the eye if he or she is lying," seems to be true in public speaking as well.

## Facial Expressions

Research has found that once a relationship has been established, the face is the area at which most people look to observe and evaluate the emotional responses of another person. As a public speaker, your facial expressions are important in your communication. Although many of the audience members in the back rows may not be able to see your expressions in detail, all of your listeners will develop a sense of how you are feeling and who you are by your facial cues. In addition to your eye-contact behavior, your ability to use your mouth and face to emphasize, stress, and illustrate emotions cannot be overlooked.

Facial expressions and habits are one of the most difficult movements to change or modify, primarily because we are so unaware of them. Like the sound of our voice,



our facial expressions have a life all their own, a life outside of our conscious awareness. We simply cannot see our face as we go about our daily life. Sure, we can view it in a mirror, a photograph, or even on videotape, but those are indeed brief moments. So our faces are literally strangers to us.

If you want to try something really unusual, stare at your face in a mirror for five minutes without looking away. No distractions. No one else in the room. Just look at your own face for five minutes. See what happens. The image in the mirror becomes almost unrecognizable after a few moments of studying the detail of your own face. Who are you, anyway?

Here's one specific suggestion for your facial expressions while you give your speech. Smile. This suggestion may sound trite, and yet it needs repeating. You need to smile. Did you know it takes less muscle effort to smile than to frown? No wonder we get so exhausted when we're frowning during our bad moods.

Smile during the first three seconds you're in front of your audience, as you get your posture centered. Even if you are going to present a very somber topic, you can still invest three seconds for smiling. It'll relax both you and your audience. You'll discover when you smile during this initial phase of the speech that you're more likely to loosen up and express a variety of emotions during the remainder of your talk.

*Never bend your head.  
Hold it high. Look the  
world straight in the eye.*  
—HELEN KELLER

But what if you're not a smiler by nature, or you happen to be depressed that day? Fake it! Yes, fake it! Life's too short. You owe it to your audience to be "up" for your talk. You can frown for the rest of the day. But give your audience the best you have. This is not therapy; it's your speech, your gift to the audience. Make it a good one!

## Breathing

An entire book could be written on the importance of breathing, but we're going to spend only three paragraphs stressing its pivotal role in making you an effective speaker. For starters, if you didn't breathe once during a five-minute speech, you'd most likely pass out, and maybe even die. How about that for being important? You could go through an entire five-minute talk and never once look at one person, give one gesture, state one transition, or wear a stitch of clothing, and not much would happen to you. Maybe speaking naked would cause something to happen, but overall, nothing much would. Yet without breathing for those five minutes, you die. It's that simple.

More than 2,000 years ago, Lao Tzu said, "It is not wise to rush about. Controlling the breath causes strain." Did you know that when you're frightened or anxious, you hold your breath? When you're speaking before an audience, you have a tendency to hold your breath. You see it in just about every beginning speaker. The rapid rate of speech. The run-on sentences, punctuated occasionally by huge gulps of air. Remember, even when you're under extreme stress, your body knows enough not to kill itself.

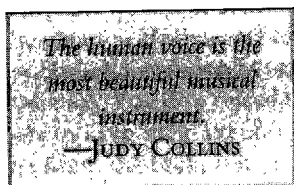
What can you do to breathe properly when speaking to an audience? Three things, really. First, begin breathing in deep, even breaths about a minute or two before you are called to speak. Don't hyperventilate and pass out. Just slow, deep,

even breaths. Second, while you're smiling and centering your posture during the first three seconds in front of your audience, draw in three deep breaths while you're doing your "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three." This will give you air to begin your speech. Third, breathe after each long sentence during your speech. Breathe from the stomach, not from the throat. Inhale with your stomach. Pause often during your speech. Pause long enough to inhale deeply and exhale completely. This will seem like an eternity when you're up in front of all those people, but it will save you. It will save not only your life but your speaking style as well.

## Vocal Characteristics

There are six aspects of your voice worth mentioning here. Vocal characteristics are made up of rate, volume, pitch, inflection, enunciation, and vocal variety.

Your speaking *rate* is the speed at which you talk. It's generally measured in number of words per minute. The average speaking rate is about 110 to 130 words per minute. Some people speak more slowly, others more rapidly. If you speak too slowly, you run the risk of losing the attention of your audience. If you speak too quickly, you make it difficult for your audience to understand you. In addition, an extremely rapid rate of speech can annoy or irritate an audience. Find a rate of speech that is comfortable for you, but don't feel that it is best to stick to this speed. One of the marks of an experienced speaker is the ability to vary the speaking rate. The most common error is for the beginning speaker to speak too rapidly. In that case, you should pause more after long sentences and phrases and take deep breaths. Another helpful aid is to occasionally mark in red the word "SLOW" on your note cards.



*Volume* is the loudness of your voice. In public speaking, you have to speak loudly enough so that your listeners in the back row can hear you without straining.

If the people in the back appear to be having difficulty, stop your talk and ask them if your voice can be heard. Speak louder if they can't hear you. A soft voice not only makes it difficult for the audience to listen to your speech, but it also can be interpreted as a sign of reticence, weakness, or fear.

If you discover that you need to develop more volume in your speaking, you might try practicing the *backyard yelling exercise*. You'll need a friend for this one. Anyone will do. Have your assistant sit in a chair in the backyard, in the parking lot of your apartment house, or anywhere you have 30 feet of free space where you won't get hit by traffic. Pace off about 30 feet between you and your assistant. Begin your speech. If your friend cannot hear you, have him raise his hand for you to increase your volume. Increase your volume, even if you feel as if you're screaming. Your assistant will lower his hand when he can hear you. This goes back and forth until you reach a volume that is loud enough for your assistant to hear from 30 feet. If you can pass this test, you'll be heard in any room.

*Pitch* refers to the highness or lowness of your voice. It can be thought of as the placement of your voice on a musical scale. Each individual has a natural pitch level. The movement of pitch either upward or downward from this natural pitch level is known as *inflection*. Inflection is used to give emphasis to certain words or phrases. A

speaker who never varies her pitch (inflection) is said to speak in a monotone fashion. A monotone voice is a boring voice after a few minutes.

One way to get inflection into your voice is to emphasize important words in your sentences. Read aloud the sentence that follows while emphasizing a different word with each reading. Begin with the emphasis on the first word, and read the sentence. Then read the sentence again, with the emphasis on the second word. Repeat the process until you've read through the sentence seven times.

*I would love to see you again.*

The meaning of the sentence changes with each different reading, doesn't it? Inflection is a powerful verbal tool in speech emphasis, and it is one of the most effective cures for a monotone delivery.

One last method for changing a monotone voice is called the *singing exercise*. You simply sing your words as you practice your speech. In a standing position, deliver your speech by singing every word. Make up a melody as you go along. Don't sing to the melody of a song you know. Just let the words and melody flow. It may feel foolish initially, but who cares? The point is to break your monotone habit.

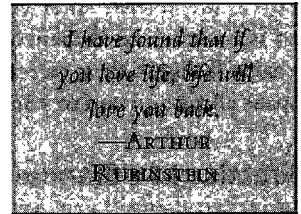
*Enunciation* consists of articulation and pronunciation. *Articulation* is defined as the ability to pronounce the letters of a word correctly, whereas *pronunciation* is the ability to pronounce the entire word correctly. There are three common causes of articulation problems: sound substitution, slurring, and the omission of sounds.

*Sound substitution* happens often in speaking. Many of us say "budder" instead of "butter," or "dat" instead of "that." In the first case, we substituted the sound of "d" for "t," and in the second example, we substituted the sound of "d" for "th."

*Slurring* is usually caused by a rapid rate of speech or a running together of words. We often say "I'll getcha a hot dog," instead of "I will get you a hot dog." Be aware of slurring your words when you speak.

The final cause of articulation problems is the *omission of sounds*. We sometimes say "flowin'" instead of "flowing," or "singin'" instead of "singing." Don't get lazy when you pronounce your words.

The final characteristic of your voice is *vocal variety*. Vocal variety refers to the variance or range you give to the rate, volume, and pitch of your speech. You'll recall that inflection is the variance or change in pitch. This gives your voice vocal variety. Variance in your volume and rate also plays an important role in keeping your speech interesting and lively. Vocal variety in your pitch, volume, and rate prevents a monotone speech delivery, and nothing puts your audience to sleep faster than a monotone voice.



## 7.3 Speech Practice

No one is born with public speaking skills, no matter what you think. The outstanding speakers are those individuals who invest countless hours of practice time improving their skills. Nothing comes without a price.

This book isn't worth a penny if you don't actually take the time and effort to practice the skills that we have been discussing up to now. The choice is ultimately yours. It's always yours. When you practice your speech, consider these guidelines for a productive practice session.

## Complete Your Outline before You Practice

Begin your practice sessions only after you have typed your final outline. Read through your outline a number of times so you become familiar with the content and structure. Then make your 4 × 6-inch note card of main points and key words so you can quickly refer to it during your practice sessions.

## Choose a Private Practice Site

Select a room in your house or apartment that will give you adequate space to walk three or four steps in any direction. Don't practice in your car during a rush-hour commute. Select a real room that is free of interruptions and distractions such as telephones, children running around, a noisy television, or even Grandma knitting quietly in the corner. After you've selected the room, set up three chairs, side by side, to represent your audience. You should be standing about eight feet away from the chairs, facing in their direction. Remember to have about three or four steps of clear space all around you so you can walk into your transitions.

## Practice in a Standing Position

There are people who practice their speeches in a prone position, in a sitting position, and even in the lotus position. But you will be standing when you deliver your speech to your audience, so you should be standing when you are practicing. If you won't practice from a standing position, you might as well just squirt lighter fluid on this book right now and set a match to it. Please practice your speech in a standing position. Anything short of this is a sin.

## Loosen Up before You Begin Practicing

As you stare at the three chairs representing your audience, get a mental picture of one of your favorite people in the world sitting in the chair on your left. Don't worry about the chair on your right. As you visualize that person, begin your deep breathing. Breathe for a minute or two with your eyes open. Deep, even breaths from your stomach. Shake your hands vigorously at your sides. Keep breathing. Roll your head to the right a couple of times and then to the left a few more times. Sing a song or just talk gibberish for a minute or so, starting out with a low volume and then going up in volume until you almost reach a shouting intensity. Keep this up until you feel like you're loose and ready to go.

## Practice in Small Increments Initially

Practice your introduction all the way through two or three times until you get it right. Then move on to your first main point. Practice it by itself two or three times until

you're satisfied with your command of the material. Then move on to the second main point. Continue the process until you've completed the conclusion. Just one section at a time. Small increments for now. Once you've moved through the entire speech, section by section, go back to the introduction and first main point, and see if you can get through both of those parts combined. Try it again until you feel satisfied. Then add the second main point to your cluster. Then add the third main point. And finally the conclusion. There, you've got the entire speech.

*There is no such thing  
as an insignificant  
improvement.*  
—TOM PETERS

## Time Your Speeches

A stopwatch is a wonderful aid when timing your speeches, but any watch with a sweep second hand will do. Time your small-increment practice sessions. You should be able to figure out roughly how long each section should be. As you practice and check your time, you might have to add a little here and cut a little there. But that's what this is all about. When you are comfortable with each section, time the entire speech and edit your talk so that it's within the required time limit. With timed practices, you should know within 30 seconds either way how long your final presentation will be. Now that's preparation!

## Practice the Entire Speech Five Times

At one practice session, practice your entire speech two times. A few hours later or the next day, practice your speech another two times all the way through, referring to your note cards only when necessary. On the morning you are scheduled to speak, practice your speech only once all the way through. And that's it. No more practice. If you practice your speech too often, you run the risk of sounding memorized. Five times, no more.

## Don't Practice in Front of a Mirror

You won't be speaking into a mirror when you deliver your speech, so don't practice with one. Mirrors have a tendency to confuse the speaker. They can distract more than help. So don't even think of practicing in front of one.

## Record Your Practice Sessions

If you're really serious about conducting practice sessions that are worthwhile, invest \$30 and pick up the cheapest audiocassette recorder you can find and record your five full-speech practice sessions. This takes a little guts and some money, but there's nothing quite like it for evaluating your performance and progress. Don't practice with a videotape unit just yet. It'll overwhelm you with visual stimuli, and you won't be focusing on your speech patterns. Save the videotape for later speeches. For now, just the audiocassette, okay? When listening to your recording, check for naturalness, the desire to communicate, and an enlarged conversational quality. Also check your voice for proper volume, rate, pitch, and vocal variety. Did you have too many verbal pauses, such as

"ah," "um," and "you know"? Observe your energy level. Did you sound enthusiastic or dead? See how helpful this \$30 recorder can be in your speech practice regimen?

## Evaluate Your Speech

Before you deliver your speech to an audience, evaluate one of your practice speeches for content, organization, and delivery. Your practice speech can be videotaped for your viewing, or have a friend watch your practice session. Either way, have your friend complete the evaluation form on the following page, or complete it yourself. Don't limit yourself to the objectives contained in the list. Feel free to add your own points. The important thing is for you to critically evaluate your speech before you present it to your audience.

## Speech Day Checkout

On the day of your talk, practice your speech one time all the way through. Take a hot shower and dab on your cologne or perfume. Smell good for yourself, if for nobody else. Don't eat a heavy meal or really greasy food three hours before you're scheduled to talk. It'll make you sleepy. And no alcohol anytime before you speak. Arrive early to the auditorium or room so you can get a feel for the layout, the atmosphere, the podium, and the microphone setup. Also, find out where the restroom is, a telephone if you need it, and where you will be sitting before you speak. Do all this *before* people begin arriving. As your speaking time nears, try to keep to yourself. This is not the time for idle chitchat. Keep to yourself and begin breathing deeply and evenly from your stomach. Glance over your key-word note card once more. Wait quietly until your name is announced. Then slowly get up from your chair, breathing evenly and deeply. You're now ready to walk to the podium. Aren't you glad you practiced? Have fun. And remember to breathe from the stomach, deeply. . . , evenly. . .

## Be Gentle on Yourself

No matter what happens, be gentle on yourself. It's only a speech! A hundred years from now, it won't matter all that much. What really counts is your decision to attempt a speech. Go get 'em.

## 7.4 Speaker Evaluation

### CONTENT

Topic appropriate to the audience?

Topic specific enough/limited in scope?

Adequate development of main points:

Human-interest material?

Statistics/expert testimony?

Statistics/expert testimony documented?

Vivid, descriptive language?

Visual aids clarified/developed points?

Audience questions answered effectively?

## ORGANIZATION

### Introduction

- Attention getter?
- Purpose of the speech stated?
- Preview of main points?
- Goodwill established?

### Body

- Transitions clearly stated?
- Internal transitions?
- Recap of each point before transition?

### Conclusion

- Summary of main points?
- Final-thought device?

### Delivery

- Appropriate dress for occasion?
- Get set before speaking?
- Straight posture?
- Relaxed, natural body movement?
- Direct eye contact?
- Expressive gestures?
- Fluid, articulate speech?
- Adequate volume?
- Adequate vocal variety?

## Your Delivery between Speeches

Academy Award-winning actor Tom Hanks once observed, “Anyone can be nice when the spotlight’s on, but what happens when the lights go down?” In this chapter, we’ve examined ways to improve your delivery—how you communicate nonverbally during a speech. But it’s also important to raise the questions, “What do you communicate to the other students between your speeches?” “How do you act before and after your 5- or 10-minute speech?” “Are you nice ‘when the lights go down’ and your speech is but a memory?”

Some speakers will spend enormous amounts of time and energy trying to improve and perfect their public speaking delivery skills, yet pay little or no attention to their behavior in class before and after they deliver their speech. As we conclude this section on speaker delivery, let’s reflect for a few moments on what nonverbal communication messages you give to others before and after your speech.

Do you attend class regularly? Or do you miss every third or fourth meeting? Do you arrive to class on time or even a few minutes early? Or do you rush in late more times than not? Do you smile at others before, during, and after class? Or do you frown or smirk as you glance around the room? Do you listen attentively when the instructor talks or students speak? Or do you read your notes from another class,

check your cell phone messages, or whisper to your neighbor? Do you encourage speakers nonverbally during their presentations by maintaining eye contact, nodding, smiling, applauding, and asking questions after the speech? Or do you check out and stare out the window, play with your pen, or fall asleep? Do you encourage and compliment others in class? Or do you roll your eyes, give disgusted sighs, and moan about every assignment? Do you interact with others briefly before and after class in supportive and friendly ways? Or are you the last one in and the first one out of the room? In other words, are you enlarging or diminishing to others by your behavior before and after you deliver your speech?

Sure, you can learn to be pleasant, positive, and poised when the spotlight is on you, but what do you communicate to others when the lights go down and you return to your seat? During the 50 hours of a semester class, less than one hour of your time is spent speaking in front of the audience. What do you communicate during the other 49 hours? Are you enlarging or diminishing? That's a delivery question worth considering.

## **7.6** Using Social Media to Increase Delivery Effectiveness

Social media can provide you with a variety of ways to make your speech more relevant, your interactions with your audience more rewarding, your information more accessible, and your speech available to the world.

### **Advertising Your Speech**

Social media is an easy yet effective way to advertise your speech as well. If you're speaking at an event that is open to the public, you can communicate the details to your followers on Twitter or your friends on Facebook. You can provide the name of the event, speech topic, location, date, and time of your presentation. Be sure to include any other helpful information such as special considerations for the occasion, dress code, admission price, and parking cost.

### **Welcoming Your Audience**

In addition to welcoming your audience in person, you can tweet a welcome to your followers or post a welcome to your friends on Facebook. It's always a nice touch to receive a brief message of welcome a few minutes before you are being introduced. If you're giving the speech to a public speaking class, make sure you send your message before the class is scheduled to begin. No matter where you give your speech, a welcome on social media will bring a smile to the faces of your audience as well as bring one to your own. Go beyond what is expected.

### **Interacting With Your Audience**

If your speaking event has the ability to scroll a live social media comment feed behind the speaker, you can check to see if the audience has any questions or comments that



you might want to address. This gives you the opportunity to be more sensitive and flexible, modifying if necessary the direction of your speech to more appropriately meet the interests or needs of your audience. Sometimes it's fun just to see insightful or humorous comments flashed upon the screen or television monitor beside you.

However, the live feed does come with some drawbacks. It can be a distraction to both the speaker and audience. Inappropriate comments can detract from your speech and the speaking occasion. And in some instances, the live feed can compete directly with the speaker, serving to upstage the presenter. But if used properly, by both speaker and audience, a live social media feed can be impressive and memorable.

## Sharing Your Materials

One of the most generous uses of online media is to share the content of your speech with others. After delivering your speech, you can post links to your PowerPoint presentation, notes, or other material you presented during your speech. By making your material available online, your audience won't need to take notes. What a gift to the audience and to the speaker. It frees everyone up to focus on the speech. Remember to post your material in PDF form so that your material cannot be modified. You might also consider labeling or watermarking your name discretely on every page of your PDF document, picture, or PowerPoint page to discourage plagiarism or copyright infringement. You can also provide your e-mail address or domain name on the first page of your document so people can contact you.

## Sharing Your Speech

YouTube is one of the easiest and most effective ways to share your speech with the world. Have one of your friends record your speech on their mobile device and upload the presentation to YouTube. Before your audience's applause ends, your presentation can be broadcast to the world. Just think of it: your grandmother in Ohio or an interested viewer in Hong Kong will be able to view your speech in all its glory.

## Learning from Your Speech

In addition to posting your speech online, for enjoyment, enlightenment, or fame, YouTube can also provide an opportunity for soliciting feedback on the effectiveness of your content, organization, and delivery. If you're enrolled in a public speaking class, your instructor or fellow students can view your speech and give informed and helpful feedback to improve your speaking skills.

## Thanking Your Audience

One final way you can use social media is to thank your audience for attending your speech. You can tweet a brief thank you to your followers or post a thank-you to your friends on Facebook. You can even e-mail a thank-you to your audience members if you have their e-mail addresses. It's amazing how impactful a simple message of thanks can be. Show gratitude in all that you do.

## **7.7** Take the Opportunity to View Your Speech

If you're fortunate enough to have your public speaking instructor or someone at your speaking event record your speech, count your blessings! Here are some suggestions that will help you get the most from your viewing of your speech.

### **Actually View the Speech**

Don't chicken out. View your speech! Even when speakers are given the opportunity to view their speeches, they will often skip the opportunity. Be strong. See what your audience sees.

### **View the Speech Alone**

Before you push the Play button, however, find a place where you can watch your speech alone.

This is no time for family members or even a best friend to be by your side as you watch. They can throw everything off balance. You'll be more concerned with their responses to your speech than with your own responses. So watch the speech by yourself. Here are some helpful suggestions when viewing your presentation.

***View the Speech WITHOUT Sound the First Time.*** Turn off the sound on the playback monitor before you hit the Start button. Yes, **TURN OFF THE SOUND**. This might sound strange, but an initial silent viewing, without the distraction of your voice, will provide greater psychological and emotional freedom to actually see what's on the screen.

It's quite an experience. Don't judge, evaluate, or even think. Just close your mouth, open your eyes, and observe during this first viewing. Watch the entire speech. No notes. No judgments. Just keep your eyes open until the speech ends.

***View the Speech WITH Sound the Second Time.*** Now you're ready to view your speech **WITH** sound, so turn up the dial on the sound control. Grab your notepad and pencil and push the Play button a second time.

It's different with sound isn't it? Your voice will most likely sound higher than you imagined because the voice you "hear" when you talk is lowered somewhat by the density of your head. No fooling. The stuff in your head actually lowers the perceived pitch of your voice, so remain calm if you don't sound as deep and wonderful as you thought. Hang in there. You'll get used to your voice after a minute or two.

### **Look for 15 Positive Things**

As you watch and listen to your speech this second time, take notes on all of the positive behaviors you see and hear. Look for what you're doing well. Seek out the positive. Look for what's working. Our natural tendency is to immediately see our weaknesses and the negatives. But that's not your goal. Your goal is to write down at least 15 positive things you notice about the content, organization, and delivery of your speech.

Here are a few positive things you can begin your list with, just in case you have difficulty seeing what you did well:

- You showed up.
- You dressed for the occasion.
- You faced the audience.
- You spoke.
- You spoke loud enough to be heard.
- You spoke on a topic.
- You remained at the podium and didn't run out of the room.
- You stood on your feet and didn't fall over.
- You kept your eyes open.

These behaviors might seem too obvious or even a bit silly, but they will help you focus on the positive. In fact, begin by looking for the obvious. Look for the little things. Give yourself credit. After jotting down a few of these behaviors, write down other behaviors you see and hear that are listed in your instructor's speaker evaluation form or in the speaker evaluation form offered earlier in this chapter.

What about your weaknesses or the behaviors that you want to improve? Sure, there's always room for improvement. But limit the number of behaviors you want to correct or improve to only one or two per speech.

Of course you might have more than one or two behaviors that are in need of improvement, but don't overwhelm yourself with negatives. Limit your list of improvements to one or two and no more. This limited focus will not only provide you with a manageable number of goals to work on for your next speech, but, more important, it will also concentrate your attention on the positive and not the negative. That's a good suggestion for viewing your speech, as well as living your life.

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## COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

### PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Loosening up

Find a large room, an empty meadow, or a deserted beach. Take off your shoes and socks (and anything else you feel comfortable removing) and simply dance for 60 seconds without thinking about dancing. Use your legs, hands, arms, head, butt, nose, and fingers. Just let your body move and dance. If you try this four or five times with an open mind and heart, you'll be amazed at how loose you become. Let go of all those tapes in your head demanding that you grow up and act your age! Whose voice is that, anyway? Just let go and have fun. Like being a kid again, huh? What was that like? How do you feel? Would you do this crazy dance again?

#### 2. Seeing an old friend

If you have access to a videotape recorder, record one of your speech practice sessions. Tape at least five minutes of one practice. Then replay the video *without sound*. It's important that you don't have sound. Without the sound, your

body will “talk” to you. Look at what your body says. Watch all of you—the face, gestures, body, arms, legs, fingers, and eyes. What does this body tell you? How does this body move? Is this body happy? Sad? Stiff? Loose? What’s going on with this body? Does it make a difference when you add sound? How does it feel when you black out the video portion and simply listen to your voice? What did you learn about yourself?

### 3. The body in other cultures

Ask an individual from a different cultural background what his or her people’s attitudes and behaviors are in regard to their bodies. Do they value and attempt to demonstrate expressive gestures when speaking? How do they feel about eye contact? Is it encouraged or discouraged? Is a conversational tone of voice appropriate for public speaking or is a more formal style valued? What do they see as unusual or inappropriate nonverbal communication behavior?

## CLASS ACTIVITIES

### 1. Group practice: expanding your delivery

Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Each student will be given an opportunity to practice a speech (that he or she has already outlined) using the silent hula, catching rain, and singing exercises presented in this chapter. For 30 seconds, each student will stand in front of the group and perform the silent hula as he or she presents (nonverbally) the introduction to a speech. After the entire group has completed the silent hula, each student will practice the catching rain technique for 60 seconds while delivering the first point of his or her speech to the group. And finally, each group member will sing 60 seconds of his or her second point. No fair talking! Only singing will count. What was this like to experiment with and expand your delivery skills? Be prepared to share your reactions to this group activity in class.

### 2. Getting rid of the “ahs” and “ums”

“Ahs,” “ums,” and all other verbal pauses are really apologies for silence in this culture. It’s as if we’re embarrassed to have any silences in our speech. We need to apologize for not having something to say immediately, so we fill in the silence with “ahs” and “ums.” Verbal pauses are distracting when they dominate our speech patterns. If you have trouble with them, try this exercise with a friend. Stand up in front of her and deliver your practice speech. When she notices you saying a verbal pause (“ah” or “um” or anything else), she simply smiles and raises her hand briefly. This signals to you that you have done it again—given an apology for silence. She doesn’t have to verbally interrupt you. She only raises her hand. This is also her signal to you that it’s okay to pause and think about what you’re going to say. When you first try this, you’ll find that your partner’s hand will be going up quite a bit. But after a while, if you permit yourself to pause before you speak, her hand will be raised less and less. Share your reactions to this activity in class.

### 3. Spending five minutes in silence

For a period of five minutes, each student is to roam about the classroom and attempt to communicate with five fellow students **WITHOUT USING**

WORDS OR NOTES. In other words, every student in class will attempt to communicate nonverbally with five other students (about 60 seconds with each person) using posture, body movement, gestures, hand motions, eye contact, and facial expressions. No one is permitted to speak during the entire time. After the five minutes is up, return to your desks and discuss the experience. What was it like to communicate without words or notes? How might this experience help or improve your speaking delivery when you speak to an audience? What did you learn about yourself?

**4. Out-of-class speaker evaluation**

Observe an out-of-class speaker and evaluate his or her effectiveness using the speaker evaluation form in this chapter, one provided by your instructor, or one you designed for this assignment. Observe a speaker in a formal speaking situation, such as a minister, politician, author, after-dinner speaker, or special occasion lecturer. Take notes as the speaker is talking, using your evaluation form as a guide. Write a report discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker. Share your observations and insights with the class.

## INFORMING YOUR AUDIENCE TEACHING OTHERS

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**After reading this chapter, you should be able to:**

- 8.1** Explain the three goals of informative speaking
- 8.2** List some designs for informative speaking
- 8.3** Offer some suggestion for language use in informative speaking
- 8.4** Identify the types of informative speeches
- 8.5** Discuss ten ideas for the question-and-answer session
- 8.6** Explain the public speaker self-image scale

During the day, Building 7 at Campbell High School serves as the classroom for nearly 110 boys and girls in five auto mechanics and body repair classes. Each period, this large airplane hangar of a room echoes with the sounds of banging and clanging, buzzing and pounding. The students enroll in auto shop to learn the basic skills for a future trade or, more likely, because they didn't enjoy the math and science classes during their first two years of high school. Regardless of their motives, they all rush through the tall sliding metal doors of Building 7 when the bell sounds, laughing and shoving as they scurry to their next class.

Six nights of the week, Building 7 lies dark, empty, and silent until 7:20 the next morning, when the auto shop teacher, Mr. Carl, unlocks the tall, silver sliding metal doors and flicks on the fluorescent lights, signaling the start of another noisy day in auto shop.

But tonight, Building 7 is transformed into a place of empowerment—a place where 11 women are learning to master their own lives in a small way and overcome some fears. These women are standing around the engine compartment of a 1987 Toyota Corolla, as Mr. Carl shows them how to change the oil and filter.

In a few moments, each woman will return to her car and begin the process of changing her own oil and filter as Mr. Carl walks among the students, answering their questions, correcting their mistakes, and congratulating their successes.

For the past six years, Mr. Carl has been teaching the adult education course entitled "Easy Car Maintenance for Women," and nearly 200 women have learned

to maintain their own cars thanks to his instruction. The students grow to love this quiet, slow-talking, 74-year-old retired auto mechanic, who wears a white shirt and red bowtie under his dark blue Sears coveralls. They love the way he asks them about their kids during the 8:00 break, the way he pats them on the shoulder when they finish changing their oil, and the cookies he bakes himself for the one-night-a-week course. They grow to love this old man whose hands are scarred from years of working with tools, yet whose eyes sparkle in the fluorescent light.

Mr. Carl was once asked why he worked as a part-time teacher at an age when others are content to sit in retirement. "For over 50 years, I've worked as an auto mechanic," he replied, "and nearly all that time was spent in silence under car hoods. When I retired eight years ago, I felt the need to pass on my trade to others. I felt this strong desire to share my knowledge and skills with people before I died."

Through Mr. Carl's teaching, 200 women in and around the city of Campbell won't have to pay to have their oil and filter changed because they now possess the skill and knowledge to do it themselves. More important, these women can share their knowledge and skills with others and, thus, pass on the legacy of Mr. Carl.

Like Mr. Carl, your role as a public speaker will often be that of a teacher. You may not see yourself as a teacher like Mr. Carl, yet one of the primary responsibilities of a public speaker is to inform the audience:

*Our highest calling is to  
pass our knowledge from  
generation to generation.  
—W. S. GILBERT*

to impart knowledge; to show the audience new skills; to share information that is important, interesting, and maybe even life changing. With your words alone, you may literally change the lives of the audience by sharing information that is truly meaningful and enlarging.

Now, you will most likely not be giving speeches every day of your life, but the ever-increasing emphasis on information in our world will demand greater skills in your ability to send and receive information. Although some of this information will be delivered in written form, much of it will be orally transmitted.

How do you inform others? How do you give directions, describe a scene, demonstrate a process, explain a concept, define a word, or tell a story? These areas of communication involve sharing information with others. Those who can inform others effectively will experience greater success in their professional and personal lives than those who cannot. Although this chapter focuses on your public speaking skills, you will find its application useful in your daily interactions with others as well.

## 8.1 Goals of Informative Speaking

As an informative speaker, you face quite a challenge speaking before any audience. Some audiences are more receptive than others; and yet, each member of your audience needs to have his or her interest aroused, to understand what you are saying, and to remember the information after you've finished speaking. These are the three primary goals of any informative talk: to stimulate interest, increase understanding, and assist retention.

### Stimulate Audience Interest

Your first goal of informative speaking is to arouse the interest of your audience. Without the successful completion of this first goal, the other two goals will not be

accomplished. The old saying, "There are no uninteresting topics, just uninterested listeners," affirms the need for you to get your audience aroused.

An experienced instructor once advised a first-year teacher, "Forget all that stuff they taught you in graduate school. The first requirement of a good teacher is to keep the students awake. Everything else is secondary." The same holds true for public speaking. If your audience's interest is not adequately stimulated, the prospects for a successful speech are dim indeed.

If you present your information in ways that make it *relevant* or personally useful to your audience, you are more inclined to arouse and maintain their interest. This is where audience analysis really pays off. Study your audience's demographics, interests, knowledge, and attitudes before selecting the materials you will present and determine how you will adapt that material to your specific audience.

Make the information relevant to where they are, not where you are. Bring your information close to where the audience lives. Drop it right in their laps. Present

*To the degree you are  
helpful is the degree to  
which you will be happy.*

—KARL REILAND

your material in ways that will make your audience realize, "I didn't know it affected me in that way." If you're talking about the importance of healthy eating habits to a group of young college students, make it relevant to them by describing how the accumulated effects of eating processed and fried foods will make life miserable for them in the future. Explain how increased risks of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases multiply when their diet is saturated with these foods. Ask them how they will feel when their bodies fail and they can't do the things they take for granted today. Ask them if that's the future they want to have. Make your topic hit home for your audience. Make it relevant.

If the information in your speech is *new*, the audience is more apt to pay attention. This principle of newness is seen in the marketing of products on your grocery store shelves. The words *new* and *improved* are splashed across the labels of hundreds of products annually. It seems that marketing research discovered that if consumers perceived that a product was "new," they would be more likely to buy it. For your speaking purposes, new information will not be difficult to find, so use new information when it's appropriate.

There are some topics that are well-worn subjects of discussion, such as weight loss, exercise, or smoking. These topics are often met with disinterest by many. But you could present one of those topics in a different light or from a slightly different angle to give it freshness. For example, a talk on computers could be presented so that the audience could see their application for possible dating or mate selection, employment assistance, or vacation rental help, rather than the usual spreadsheet and word-processing functions.

Information is more likely to stimulate audience interest when it is *startling*. When we are startled, we are emotionally shaken, and all of our attention is focused on dealing with the source of that surprise. To hear a warning from the speaker that skin cancer is on the upswing in the United States may arouse our interest. But to hear that some scientists predict that in 20 years, one out of every three adults will experience some form of skin cancer by the time he or she reaches middle age will have a startling impact on the audience.



## Increase Audience Understanding

The second goal of informative speaking is to present the information in a way that will be understood by your audience. Simple language, clear organization, examples, and visualization are four ways you can help your audience understand what you are saying.

The first way you can increase understanding is to use *simple language* when you speak to an audience. Aristotle once advised, "Think as wise men think, but speak as the common people speak." Some years ago, one of the foremost authorities on U.S. economics taught at the University of California at Berkeley. She had authored several books on economics and had testified before Congress on numerous occasions, discussing our nation's economic woes. This expert was intelligent, gifted, and accomplished. But when she spoke in her Economics 2 course, the majority of her students didn't understand half the words she used. The students left her lectures feeling confused, frustrated, and often cheated. Here she is, "Ms. Economics Expert," and she couldn't speak in a style they could understand. What a waste of time! Abraham Lincoln cautioned, "We should speak so the least intelligent in the room can understand our words, then everyone will understand."

A speech that is *clearly organized* will help your audience understand what you have to say. The newspaper-writing adage to "tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them" works with public speaking audiences as well. Remember the preview of main points, main-point transitions, and the summary of main points?

We need to remember that speaking is different from reading. The reader can see the various headings and subheadings, and can see the paragraph structure on the printed page. But the listener cannot. He must rely on *hearing* the words of the speaker. Make your speech easy to understand by previewing the points, stating clear transitions, and reviewing the points.

The third way you can increase understanding is to use *examples* and *stories* in the development of your speech. Providing examples is one of the most concrete ways of helping your audience understand the ideas, concepts, and feelings you are trying to communicate. Every main point or concept you are trying to share with your audience should be accompanied by an example, be it brief or detailed. Stories are useful in developing a point you are trying to have the audience understand. The advantage of telling stories is that they have a definite beginning, middle, and ending, and they usually captivate the audience's attention more effectively than shorter forms of examples. Another advantage is that a story is far easier to master and share with an audience than a list of statistics and facts. And the audience will most likely remember a well-told story long after the statistics and quotations have been forgotten.

To be conscious that you  
are ignorant is a great  
step to knowledge.

—BENJAMIN DISRAELI

The fourth way you can help your audience understand what your speech is about is to have them *visualize*. Visual aids are worth the effort they require because the dividends they pay in helping your audience see and understand what you're discussing are great. You can also have your audience visualize without the use of physical props. Many things you talk about cannot be adequately described on paper,

such as the distance to the nearest star, the weight of the earth, or the speed of light. These concepts can be visualized when you have the audience “see” them in terms of something more familiar. For example, a speaker may describe the information storage capacity of one microchip as equal to the amount of information that could be stored in 100 full-size books.

## Assist Audience Retention

The third goal of informative speaking is to help your audience remember what you have said. Now don’t get your hopes too high. Studies in listening and retention clearly suggest that we don’t remember all that much of what we hear. Immediately after we listen to a lecture, we generally retain only 50 percent of the material presented. And within two weeks, we can remember only 25 percent of what was said. There is some recent research that would lead us to believe that the actual figures are much lower.

What can you do to help the audience remember what you said? Unfortunately, much of it is out of your hands. *Retention* is determined to a large extent by the listener’s motivation, interests, training, psychological state, physical health, life circumstance, stress level, work schedule, interpersonal conflicts, and numerous other competing demands.

But there are still some specific things you can do to increase the probability that the audience will retain some of the information. The use of repetition, association, acronyms, one-sentence sayings, and handouts can all help your audience remember your talk.

*Repetition* is a useful tool in your attempts to help your audience remember what you said. You can use it to repeat a thought. “This is so important, let me repeat that idea for you one more time,” or “I need to say it again.” Your preview and summary of main points in the introduction and conclusion of your speech are a form of repetition. You can also repeat the main point you are completing before going on to your next point by saying, “Now that we’ve looked at America in the 1970s, we can move on to our second point, and that’s how America looked in the 1980s.”

The use of *association* is a powerful tool for helping people retain information. Its purpose is for the listener to associate one thing with another. Usually, you have a listener associate a known quantity with an unknown quantity. For example, suppose you are trying to describe the workings of a jet engine to an audience of sixth-graders. You might want to say that the jet engine pushes out air and forces the plane forward, just as a balloon is thrust forward when you blow it up and let it go. You hope that the kids can make the association between the engine and the balloon. If you can use association in your speech, your audience will more likely remember your talk.

An *acronym* is a word formed from the initial letters of groups of words in a set phrase. The acronym is a very creative and effective technique when you want your audience to remember the main points of your speech. For example, if you presented a speech on acceptance skills in communication, you could use the acronym “MOM” to help the audience remember the three main points, which are “Mingle, Openness, and Mirroring.” Acronyms are a simple way of having your audience retain the main points of your speeches. Here’s another example. Recently, a young woman gave a

talk on three aspects of communication. They were (1) talk is cheap, watch behavior; (2) attitude is more important than aptitude; and (3) perception is communication. To help the audience remember her three points, she had them recite the word “TAP,” which represented the first letters of the first words of each principle: “T” for “Talk,” “A” for “Attitude,” and “P” for “Perception.” After she gave the speech and was getting into her car in the parking lot of the auditorium, a young man came up to her, smiled, and said, “TAP, talk, attitude, and perception. I remembered your speech.” He smiled and walked on. He didn’t say anything else, simply that, and kept walking. But he had remembered the main points of her talk. Use a simple acronym, and your listeners will remember your speech, too.

A fourth method for getting your audience to remember your talk is the use of a *one-sentence saying* that summarizes the theme or central idea of your speech. The sentence can be one you construct yourself, a quotation, a proverb, a verse from a poem, a title from a movie or book, or anything else that is no longer than a sentence and is easy to remember. If you use the one-sentence technique, state the sentence in the introduction, the transitions to each main point, and the conclusion.

For example, a speaker gave a speech entitled “Premarital Sex and You” to high school students at a summer retreat. In the speech, the young man addressed the social, psychological, and physical wounds that premarital sex could inflict on the lives of those high school students. The one sentence the speaker used as the theme for the talk was simply “Going to bed can cost you plenty.” He must have used that sentence 10 times in the speech. “Going to bed can cost you plenty.” Your one-sentence saying can have a powerful impact on the audience’s retention of your message. Keep your message simple, and keep your audience focused so that they’ll remember.

*The more you say, the  
less people remember.  
The fewer the words, the  
greater the profit.*  
—FENELOR

The final thing you can do to help your audience remember your speech is to prepare a *one-page handout* highlighting the important points of your talk. You can simply outline the key points and include suggested readings. Leave some space between your key ideas on the handout so the listeners can jot down notes or things to remember. If you invest the extra time and energy these handouts require, the payoff can be significant, because the listeners have something in their hands to help them remember your speech.

## 8.2 Designs for Informative Speaking

There are three basic designs or strategies for constructing an informative speech that we’ll be examining next: exposition, description, and narration. Most informative speeches use a combination of two or more of these designs in their construction.

### Exposition

The first approach to informative speaking is exposition. *Exposition* means to expose or explain. Therefore, the main goal of exposition is to inform your audience. Exposition is used to explain a process, concept, or idea to others. You’ve used this form of

informative speaking before when you've given directions to your home, told a story, described a restaurant, or defined a word. There are three forms of exposition: definition, demonstration, and analysis.

**Definition.** The first form of exposition is *definition*. If you want to give your audience a clear idea of what you're talking about, they will have to understand the words and concepts presented in your talk. It's important that you define words or concepts that may be unfamiliar, vague, or abstract to your listeners. When you define a word or concept, use simple language. If possible, use your own words to define the term. Try to avoid dictionary or technical definitions because they tend to sound stiff and lifeless to the listener. The definition is the fundamental building block of all informative speaking. Without an understanding of your words and concepts, your audience will be lost in your speech. There are three ways that you can make your definitions clear to your audience: example, comparison, and etymology.

When you define a word by *example*, you use examples to clarify the word or concept. An example is something that is used to illustrate a point. To define by example is especially helpful when you are trying to clarify a vague or abstract word. When using examples, you can use the actual object, such as showing a fighting saber when talking about samurai swords. Or you can give a verbal example of brotherly love as you define a certain aspect of the abstract term "love."

*Comparison* can also be used to define a word or concept by comparing the word to something that is known to the audience. If you can relate a new word or concept to something that is already understood by the audience, you will be more successful in getting your message across. A speaker trying to define the concept of balancing on a surfboard might compare it to walking on a railroad track or riding a skateboard.

The third form of definition uses etymology. Often, it is useful to trace the origin and development of a word in your attempts to give clarity. This is called *etymology*—the study of the origin and development of words. A speaker once traced the word "sarcasm" to its original Greek term *sarkasmos*, which means "to rend or rip flesh." The original Greek definition gave her audience a much more descriptive picture of her term.

**Demonstration.** When attempting to inform your audience about a process, the second form of exposition, demonstration, works well. *Demonstration* enables you to actually show the audience how something works or how something is made. The use of demonstration can also involve the participation of your audience. For example, if the subject of your speech is emergency water safety techniques, and you are demonstrating the technique used for relaxing a muscle cramp in your leg, you could have the audience members rub their own legs to get a feel for the technique, or you could demonstrate it yourself.

A demonstration speech would be appropriate if you were going to speak on topics such as making sushi, repairing a lamp, cutting hair, using a vacuum cleaner, checking for skin cancer, or binding a book. Some of these topics would lend themselves to audience participation, whereas others would not. Consider the choice carefully before you invite audience participation.

Review the suggestions on visual-aid usage discussed in Chapter 5 if you will be using demonstration in your speech. If you are going to demonstrate a process or

show how something works for your audience, here are some additional suggestions to consider when constructing and delivering your talk.

*Cluster the steps* of your demonstration into a maximum of three or four main points. Even the simplest of processes requires a multitude of mini-steps for its completion. Your goal is to cluster these mini-steps into three or four major clusters or categories. For instance, the seemingly simple process of tossing a salad contains a number of steps that would confuse an audience if you were to present each one as a main point. Instead, cluster these steps into three main points, such as “gather the materials, prepare the ingredients, and toss the salad.” Other cluster designs, such as “Plan, Do, Finish,” and “Gather Materials, Do the Process, and Clean Up,” are useful when trying to put your process into some recognizable form. Clustering your steps provides clarity of organization for your audience and ease of handling for you.

Another way you can help your audience understand and remember your demonstration is to *preview and review main points in the introduction and conclusion* of your speech. Remember that you need to lead your audience by the hand and clearly orient and review the process. If

*We create our reality  
with our language.*  
—SHUNRYU SUZUKI

you want to be really organized and impressive, number the steps in your preview and summary of main points, so it sounds like, “The first step is to gather the materials, the second step is to mix the ingredients, and the third and final step is to bake the cake.”

The final suggestion for demonstrating a process is to include *dead-time talk*. When a speaker is actually demonstrating the slicing of the vegetables, the carving of the wood, or the mixing of the ingredients, there is a tendency on the part of the speaker to focus on the process and not talk. In other words, the audience is watching the process, and the speaker is not saying a word. That’s okay if the silence lasts a few seconds, but 20 or 30 seconds of silence could make your audience feel uncomfortable. This dead time should be filled with some discussion. When you are demonstrating a process in a speech and you have 20 or 30 seconds of possible dead time, share a brief anecdote about the first time you ever did the process or a humorous incident that happened to you when you were doing this process. This dead-time talk not only fills the silence, but it also adds color and substance to your talk.

**Analysis.** The third form of exposition is analysis. *Analysis* is the breaking down of an idea, concept, or event into its various parts to get a clearer picture of how something operates or functions. The review of a play or movie, the structure of the federal government, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal, and the development of the space program are topics for which you could utilize analysis in your presentation.

When presenting to an audience topics that could possibly be difficult to understand—such as a budget report, an organizational flowchart, or a newly implemented time management program—dividing the concept into its component parts for closer examination is always beneficial.

## Description

The second approach to informative speaking is description. *Description* makes use of sensory information to verbally paint a clear picture of what you’re talking about

without the use of visual aids. The categories of description that you can use are size, shape, weight, color, composition, and age.

*Size* can be described in terms such as “big” or “small” or “large” or “tiny,” but these terms are subjective and relative. They can mean different things to different listeners. It’s much better to be specific when describing size to your audience. A speaker can describe a cut on the arm as a “large cut,” but that description does not paint the same picture as another description with specific dimensions. A cut that is described as “eight inches in length, half an inch wide, and two inches deep” paints a picture that would make even the sturdiest of listeners squirm in their seats.

*Shape* can be described in geometric forms, such as square, triangular, round, spherical, and rectangular. “His face was square with a cone nose,” “The racetrack is oblong,” and “Her house looked like a rectangular box” are examples of using shapes to describe objects.

The *weight* of an object, like its size, can be described in a subjective and relative fashion, such as “light,” “heavy,” “featherweight,” or “hefty.” A more precise way to describe an object’s weight is to report it in ounces, pounds, and tons. Instead of saying that “the man was heavy,” you could describe the man as “weighing 500 pounds, or one-quarter of a ton.”

*Color* is the fourth category of description you can use when painting a mental picture of the object you are describing. The obvious labels of “black and white” and “red and green” help give the audience a clearer picture of what you’re communicating. It’s useful to link the color to a common object that is familiar to the audience’s experience, such as “red as a cherry,” “blue as the ocean,” or “black as a moonless night.”

The *composition* of an object provides further detail to the picture you are painting. Composition refers to the makeup or construction of an object. “His legs looked like plucked chicken skin,” “The lake was as smooth as glass,” and “His hair was matted down like oiled feathers” are examples of composition.

A final category of description is *age*. The usual descriptors of “new” and “old” are helpful in painting a picture of an object. But once again, more specific descriptions of age, such as months, years, and centuries, provide more vividness. To describe the sofa as “being in our family for over 50 years” gives us a better appreciation for its age than to simply describe it as “an old sofa.”

## Narration

The third form of informative speaking is *narration*. Storytelling is the oldest form of passing information from one generation to another. Before the written word, myths of the creation, stories explaining life’s mysteries, and rituals that bound tribes and cultures together were passed on in the form of stories. Century after century, these stories were handed down through the generations.

*We have stories to tell,  
stories that provide wisdom  
about the journey of life.*

—SAUL RUBIN

In public speaking, storytelling or narration can be used as a powerful means of clarifying an idea or concept for your audience. Equally important is the ability of a

story to stick in the listener's memory long after the story has been told. When you use narration in your speech to describe an important concept or idea, you might consider these suggestions:

**Your story should illustrate your point.** Don't include a story in your speech just because it's your favorite. Your story must illustrate, demonstrate, or clarify a point you are trying to make with your audience.

**Know your story.** You should be so familiar with your story that you could tell it without the use of notes. Know the correct pronunciation of all the words, names, and places in the story. You should know your story so well that you become the story.

**Become the various characters.** When reciting dialogue, use the voices of the various characters in your story. This may feel awkward at first, but it will present a better story to your listeners if you sound like the "old woman," the "frightened boy," or the "mean old king." Your nonverbal behavior can also be a way of taking on the personality of the various characters. Use the posture, walk, gestures, and facial expressions of the different characters so that your audience can also "see" the story you are telling.

**Time your story during your practice sessions.** It often takes longer to tell a story than you would expect. You get caught up in the characterization, the detail, and the emotions of the story, and before you know it, your speaking time is up. Time your story when you practice your speech. You may have to cut a little here and there to get the story to conform to the time requirements.

### **8.3** Language Use for Informative Speaking

Before we outline the basic types of informative speeches, we need to mention some additional recommendations for the effective use of language in your presentations. The message sent isn't always the message received, and the following suggestions will help you in your attempts to communicate clearly with your audience in all types of public speaking.

#### **Simple Language**

Many beginning speakers feel the need to impress an audience with highly elaborate, ornate, or complex language. So instead of saying, "The group members were residents of Spain," a speaker might say, "The group members were denizens of Spain." "Denizens" sounds fine, but who knows what it means? The speaker, in her attempt to sound impressive, increases her chances of losing her audience. Use language that is simple and readily understood by your audience. Avoid using technical language or jargon that is foreign or unfamiliar to your audience. If you must use specialized vocabulary, define the words clearly and simply so that your audience can understand what you mean. Finally, when using acronyms, make certain that you explain what each letter represents. For instance, "AA stands for Alcoholics Anonymous," or "CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation." You might assume your audience

knows what the letters stand for, but if you're wrong, you've just lost more of your listeners along the way.

## Specific Language

Avoid using vague or abstract language in your speeches. Overused words and clichés should also be avoided. If you use language that is vague or overused, the audience isn't challenged, and they may begin to drift off to other things in the room besides you. You don't want that. So use words that are as specific and concrete as possible. Instead of saying, "The woman planted some flowers in her yard," you might want to use more specific words: "The woman planted purple tulips, yellow roses, and red geraniums in her yard." Do you notice the difference? Which scene do you see more vividly? Remember to use specific words in your language.

## Active Language

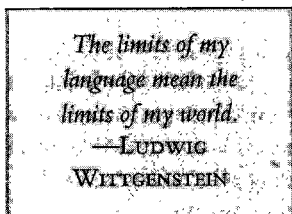
Use strong, active verbs in your speeches. Avoid using weak verbs such as *is*, *was*, *will be*, and *are*. Instead of saying, "It is my feeling that ...," you can more forcefully announce, "I feel ...". Which of the following two statements sounds more assertive: "This matter needs *to be* brought before the board of directors" or "This matter *demand*s the attention of the board of directors"? Your choice of verbs will make a critical difference in the movement, urgency, and flow of your speeches. Will your language put the audience to sleep or take them for a roller-coaster ride?

## Personal Language

Language that is personal in nature will have a greater impact in reaching your audience than more formal or distant language. The use of personal pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *us*, and *we* will help bring you closer to your audience. Their use can make the audience feel that you are interested in them and understand their concerns and desires. Notice the difference between these two sentences: "Americans need to get a physical exam once every two years" and "You need to get a physical exam once every two years." The first sentence is directed to 290 million people. The second sentence is delivered to only one person. Language that is personal will bridge that gap between you and your listeners.

## Guiding Language

Another way you can use language more effectively in helping your audience understand and remember your speech is to use language that guides them in, around, and through your presentation. Transitions are the best devices the speaker can utilize in guiding and directing the listener. External transitions are complete sentences used to signal movement from one major part of the speech to another. Between the main points of your speech, external transitions are essential in directing the listener from one point to another. "Now that





I've discussed the history of the radio, let's move to my second point, and that's the innovations after World War II." This transition even recapped the previous main point ("Now that I've discussed ...") before signaling movement into the second point of the talk. Internal transitions are those words and phrases that signal movement between the smaller parts of a sentence or main point.

Internal transitions such as *and*, *also*, *but*, *however*, *although*, *because*, *on the other hand*, *for example*, *therefore*, and *finally* all signal relationships between the smaller parts of sentences or main points. Use internal transitions to keep your thoughts connected to one another and your listeners connected to your speech. Transitions are the verbal bridges that show the relationships between your points and thoughts, and they keep you linked to your audience.

## Unbiased Language

In this world of cultural diversity, your task as a public speaker is to demonstrate respect for your audience by using language that does not demean or insult the listeners. You are to use language that isn't perceived as belittling or hurtful to another person or group of people because of their race, ethnicity, age, class, gender, or disability. The use of unbiased words in your speech can encourage an audience to be more open to your thoughts and ideas, even though they might hold different positions on that same topic or issue. By using language that honors and respects the audience, your speech can encourage receptivity to your ideas, open discussion, and even promote a willingness for the audience to modify or change their opinions because you used words that honored and respected them. The use of unbiased language can increase your credibility as a speaker because it displays your awareness and sensitivity to the many differences among your audience. Here are a few specific ways to avoid bias in your speeches.

Stereotyping occurs when you assign characteristics to people solely on the basis of their class or grouping. When you say that athletes are poor students, Asians are shy, old people are grouchy, or politicians are corrupt, you are stereotyping all members of that category of people or ethnic group. As speakers, we must avoid any use of stereotyping a class or group of people. Instead, talk about specific individuals without reference to any particular group to which they may be associated. In our examples, you can be more specific by saying, "Bill was a poor student," "Jill Yamamoto seemed reticent during our discussion group," "My grandfather often gets angry," and "Senator Mitch Foster was convicted of perjury." Notice how the statements were about specific individuals and not groups of people?

The traditional use of the pronoun "he" and the noun "man" is another common way a speaker can demonstrate bias in the language of a speech. When speakers use "he" or "man" to refer to both males and females, these words can elicit masculine images and feelings in the minds of the audience. This is known as *gender bias*. One easy way to avoid gender bias is to simply say "he or she," or "women or men" when no gender-specific reference is desired. This acknowledges both male and female and doesn't emphasize one gender over another. A second way to avoid gender bias is the use of plurals. Instead of stating that "A teacher uses all of her skills to reach her students," you could use plurals and change the sentence to, "Teachers

use all of their skills to reach their students." A final way to avoid gender bias is to replace words or phrases that contain man or woman with gender-neutral terms. For instance, replace words such as "fireman" with "firefighter," "chairman" with "chairperson," "cleaning woman" with "office cleaner," and "mankind" to "humanity." The use of gender-neutral terms avoids bias and promotes greater equality in the minds of your audience.

## Positive Language

Ultimately, you want to have a positive effect on your audience. Not only do you want them to understand and remember your message, but you also want them to perceive you as a credible speaker, someone they can trust and respect. You may even want them to like you. We're only human. In addition to the obvious recommendations of using appropriate language (no swearing or vulgarity) and avoiding emotionally loaded words or terms (don't refer to Texans as "rednecks" while addressing the Texas Republican Convention), you should be complimentary to your listeners whenever you can. Begin your talk by thanking the audience for the invitation to address them. Research the audience or group so you can mention in your speech one or two things they've accomplished recently. And end with a final appeal that is in accordance with the group's goals and objectives.

Above all, you want to have an enlarging impact on your listeners. They should feel that their time with you was well spent, and your positive language and attitude will help to guarantee this goal.

## 8.4 Types of Informative Speeches

Now that we've examined the goals and designs for informative speaking, let's turn our attention finally to the various types of informative speeches. The three primary informative-speech designs are expository, descriptive, and narrative. Sample main-point structures for each of the various types of speeches to inform follow.

### Expository Speeches

#### *Definition Speech*

*Specific Purpose: To define three aspects of success.*

- I. The first aspect is personal fulfillment.
- II. The second aspect is intellectual stimulation.
- III. The third aspect is social contribution.

#### *Demonstration Speech*

*Specific Purpose: To demonstrate the three steps required in baking cookies.*

- I. The first step is to gather your materials.
- II. The second step is to mix the ingredients.
- III. The third step is to bake the cookies.

## Analysis Speech

*Specific Purpose: To describe the three branches of the federal government.*

- I. The first branch of the federal government is the legislative branch.
- II. The second branch of the federal government is the judicial branch.
- III. The third branch of the federal government is the executive branch.

## Descriptive Speeches

### *Describing a Person*

*Specific Purpose: To describe three characteristics of George Washington.*

- I. The first characteristic of Washington is that he was very intelligent.
- II. The second characteristic of Washington is that he possessed a brilliant military mind.
- III. The third characteristic of Washington is that he was a persuasive speaker.

### *Describing a Place*

*Specific Purpose: To describe three Lake Tahoe attractions.*

- I. The first attraction is Lake Tahoe's beautiful lake.
- II. The second attraction is Lake Tahoe's campgrounds.
- III. The third attraction is Lake Tahoe's hiking trails.

### *Describing an Event*

*Specific Purpose: To explain the Denver Broncos' Super Bowl journey.*

- I. The first stage was the preseason training.
- II. The second stage was the regular season.
- III. The third stage was the Super Bowl playoff postseason.

## Narrative Speeches

### *Personal Experience Narrative*

*Specific Purpose: To relate my aircraft adventure in Montana.*

- I. I was flying to Montana in a Piper Cub airplane.
- II. Inclement weather forced the plane to crash in the foothills of eastern Montana.
- III. I survived six days before being rescued by forest rangers.

### *Historical Narrative*

*Specific Purpose: To explain the bombing of Pearl Harbor.*

- I. The Japanese planned the attack for two years.
- II. The surprise attack was devastating in terms of loss of lives.
- III. The attack forced the United States into World War II.

## 8.5 Question-and-Answer Session

When presenting an informative or persuasive speech, you may find it helpful to hold a brief question-and-answer session after you conclude your presentation. Questions from the audience allow you to provide specific information that might not have been covered in your speech. It's also a great opportunity to interact with your audience in a more flexible and intimate way, letting them see another side of you. Here are a few suggestions that will make your question-and-answer session more effective.

1. **Prepare for Questions.** As you prepare and practice your speech, be thinking of questions the audience may ask. Make a list of possible questions that address difficult to understand or controversial aspects of your presentation. You might even have a friend or colleague listen to your speech and suggest questions that your audience might ask. It's always good to be prepared.
2. **Announce the Question-and-Answer Session Before Your Speech.** You might have the person introducing you announce that a question-and-answer session will be held after you conclude your speech. If you don't have someone introducing you, you can state in your speech introduction that you'll answer any questions after your speech. This gives the audience members time to formulate their questions as you're speaking.
3. **Model the Questions.** After you conclude your speech, model the manner in which you want the questions asked by raising your hand and saying, "Now I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have." By raising your hand, you are demonstrating how you'd like the audience to ask their questions, so it won't be a free-for-all with people speaking all at the same time. Take control from the beginning.
4. **Restate the Questions.** Restate each question to the entire audience after the question has been asked. Begin your response with "The question was ..." and repeat the question. By doing so, you ensure that the entire audience hears and understands the question. When you restate the question, speak to the entire audience and not just the individual who asked the question. Remember, you're addressing the entire audience and not having a dialogue with one person.
5. **Use the 25/75 Percent Rule.** When you're answering the question, look at the person who asked the question 25 percent of your speaking time, and maintain eye contact with the rest of the audience the other 75 percent of the time. Don't get into a conversation or debate with the individual. Keep your remarks and eye contact primarily focused on your audience.
6. **Keep Your Answer Short.** Your answer should be as brief as possible. A sentence or two at the most. Avoid a yes or no response, but don't give a second speech either. The question was raised by one person in your audience and not on the minds of the entire audience. So keep your remarks short and sweet. Just answer the question and move on.
7. **Admit You Don't Know.** If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest and say so. Don't make up an answer or ramble on and on about the fact that you don't know. Simply say, "I don't know the answer, but I'll be happy to research the answer and get back to you if you'll give me your e-mail address after the speech." Short and sweet.

8. **Smile.** Above all else, be friendly and pleasant as you respond to questions. Speak slowly, maintain eye contact, be enthusiastic, and smile. Above all else, smile. The effectiveness of your question and answer session will be judged not on your knowing all the answers to the questions, but by your willingness to be of service to your listeners. Be friendly as you attempt to serve your audience. Remember to smile.
9. **Control the Audience.** Don't let one individual dominate the question-and-answer session by asking too many questions or giving a speech of his own. If a person is asking too many questions, address the individual directly by saying, "You've asked a number of questions already. Does anyone else have a question?" If an individual is making a long-winded statement instead of asking a question, ask, "Do you have a question for me?" If the person continues talking you can say, "We can dialogue about this matter after the session is over. Does anyone else have a question?"
10. **Conclude the Question-and-Answer Session.** Know when to quit. If the audience is getting restless, falling asleep, or sneaking out of the room, it's time to conclude the question-and-answer session. Limit the questions to five at most. The majority of your audience won't be heavily invested in listening to your responses to questions they didn't ask. So keep the session short. Five to seven minutes at most. Be kind and let the audience go on with their lives. Simply announce, "Well, it seems that there are no more questions, so once again, thank you for coming and have a wonderful rest of the day." Don't you wish all the events in your life could end this nicely?

## 8.6 Public Speaker Self-Image Scale

Now that you've had some experience presenting two or three speeches to an audience, it might be interesting to assess the image you have of yourself as a public speaker. Earlier in this book you responded to the Speaker Apprehension Self-Assessment Scale before you actually began your journey as a public speaker. Take a few moments now and respond to this Public Speaker Self-Image Scale. Read and respond to each statement from your current perspective as an experienced speaker.

As a public speaker, I see myself ...

1. focused more on the *audience's* needs and concerns, rather than my own.
 

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
2. confident that I will demonstrate natural, enthusiastic delivery.
 

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
3. confident that I will present a relevant and interesting speech.
 

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
4. confident that I will present a clearly organized speech.
 

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5. confident that I will feel relaxed when I deliver a speech.

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

6. confident that I will successfully respond to questions from the audience.

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

7. confident that I will enjoy delivering a speech.

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Add up your total score for the seven questions and reflect upon your responses to these statements. A higher score can indicate greater confidence than a lower score. What changes in your self-concept as a public speaker do you notice? What areas of growth and improvement do you see? What areas still need some attention and effort? Realize that with any skill, the more practice and experience you possess, the more confident and relaxed you will be performing that skill. Public speaking is a skill that provides you with many life benefits, so take opportunities to put your speaking skills to use and watch how your confidence will soar. Good for you.

## SAMPLE INFORMATIVE SPEECH OUTLINE

### SILENT RETREAT CENTERS

*Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about silent retreat centers.*

#### Introduction

A few years ago, I found myself getting frustrated over little things at work, angry with family and friends, and miserable about my busy, frantic lifestyle. I felt I needed a change. Then a friend recommended that I go to a silent retreat center for two or three days and let the silence speak to me. I did go, and it made a world of difference. Today, I'd like to explain what a silent retreat center is, what it does, and how to find a silent retreat center.

#### Body

- I. First, I'd like to explain the purpose of a silent retreat center.
  - A. A silent retreat center gives you a vacation from a busy, noisy world.
    1. Rita Winters, in her book, *The Green Desert*, explains that "the purpose of silent retreat is to leave the noise of the world and discover the peace in silence."
    2. Story about my first time at a silent retreat center.
  - B. Silent retreat centers are provided by a variety of religious groups.
  - C. Lodging, food, and quiet are provided for you.
- II. Second, what a silent retreat center does for you.
  - A. The silence provides you with self-communication.
    1. Sara Park McLaughlin, in her book, *Meeting God in Silence*, tells us that "silence lets you hear your deepest voice."
    2. Story about Thomas Merton's deep listening.
  - B. The silence can provide psychological healing.
    1. Richard Foster, in his book, *Freedom of Simplicity*, warns that "the complexity of rushing to achieve and accumulate more in life threatens to overwhelm and harm us."
    2. Story about my sister's silent retreat center experience.

- C. The silence can provide spiritual direction.
- III. Third, how to find a silent retreat center.
  - A. Making the decision to go to a silent retreat center.
    - 1. You need to decide to take good care of yourself.
    - 2. Counselor Dave Pennington explains that "even your decision to treat yourself to a time away from the world is the beginning of a more serene and balanced life."
  - B. The Internet is an excellent resource for finding silent retreat centers.
    - 1. Try [www.retreatsonline.com](http://www.retreatsonline.com) for listings.
    - 2. Call the center and speak with someone before making a reservation.
  - C. Things to take to the silent retreat.
    - 1. Comfortable clothing.
    - 2. A journal.
    - 3. Reading material.
    - 4. A gentle attitude.

### Conclusion

Today, I've shared with you the purpose of a silent retreat center, what it does for you, and how to find a silent retreat center. It's my hope that if you're feeling a little stressed with life, frustrated with friends and family, and miserable about a lifestyle that is spinning out of control, you might consider making a reservation at a silent retreat center. Thomas Merton once said that "one's deepest journey passes through silence." I hope you begin your journey soon.

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## SAMPLE KEY-WORD OUTLINE

### Introduction

Frantic life story

Silent retreat: is, does, find

### Body

- I. What silent retreat is
  - Vacation (Winters reference 1)
  - Variety of groups
  - Lodging, food, quiet
- II. What silent retreat does
  - Self-communication (McLaughlin reference 2)
  - Psychological healing (Foster reference 3)
  - Spiritual direction

## III. How to find silent retreat

Decide to attend retreat (Pennington reference 4)

Internet search

Things to take

**Conclusion**

Silent retreat: is, does, find

Merton quotation

**COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES****PERSONAL ACTIVITIES****1. The best teacher**

Who was the best teacher you have had in your life? What did he or she teach? What did this person teach you about yourself? What did you like or appreciate about this teacher? Can you identify any specific techniques or approaches in the person's informative speaking that you felt were especially effective in helping you learn? Can you identify any specific delivery characteristics that captivated and held your attention? Which of these delivery and informative-speaking techniques might you use in your own personal speaking? Have you ever written this teacher a thank-you note for his or her contribution to your learning?

**2. What do you teach others?**

Although you may not realize it, you are always teaching those around you by your example. Children in the neighborhood, your family members, those at work, and your friends observe your actions over time. It's not really what you say that's important. It's what you do. What does your behavior say about you? Do you keep promises? Are you punctual? Are you enlarging? Do you listen without interrupting? Do you encourage? Can you keep a secret? Do you touch? Are you there when others need a friend? What does your behavior teach others about you?

**3. Teachers in other cultures**

Ask an individual from a different cultural background about his or her culture's attitudes and behaviors toward teachers. Are teachers valued? Are they respected? How are they paid? What are the primary teaching methods? How do students interact with their teachers? What classroom attitudes and behaviors are different from ours? How are they similar?

**CLASS ACTIVITIES****1. Group discussion: Brainstorm informative speech topics**

Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Each group is to brainstorm a minimum of 30 possible topics for informative speaking. What topics are of interest to the group? Remember not to evaluate or judge any of the suggestions



offered by the group members. After the group has completed its list, review the list and discuss which topics might be of interest to the entire class. Which topics might not be of interest? Why? Be prepared to share your group's list with the class.

**2. Explanation speech**

Prepare, practice, and present a three- to five-minute informative speech explaining a word, concept, theory, or idea. Develop each of your three main points with documented information and examples. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**3. Demonstration speech**

Prepare, practice, and present a five- to seven-minute demonstration speech showing how something is made or how something works. Use the cluster method of arranging the main points of your speech. Develop each of your main points with documented information and examples. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**4. Tribute speech**

Prepare, practice, and present a five- to seven-minute tribute speech honoring someone who is important in your life. The purpose of this speech is to share three wonderful things about this individual with your audience. A tribute speech can be used to honor someone at a birthday, retirement party, anniversary, or eulogy. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**5. Informative speech**

Prepare, practice, and present a five- to seven-minute speech on a topic that would be of interest to your audience. Research this topic thoroughly after analyzing your audience. Develop each of your main points with documented information and examples. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**6. What it's like to ... speech**

Prepare, practice, and present a five- to seven-minute speech describing what it's like to be or do something—for instance, what it's like to be the oldest child, divorced, a twin, a police officer, an Asian American, an artist, a mechanic, or to parachute from an airplane. Research this topic thoroughly after analyzing your audience. Develop each of your main points with documented information and examples. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

## PERSUADING YOUR AUDIENCE

### CHANGING OTHERS

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**After reading this chapter, you should be able to:**

-  Summarize the basics of persuasion
-  List and explain Aristotle's three persuasive proofs
-  Identify some types of persuasive speeches

It's the silence of the place that Michelle loves most. Nestled in a secluded corner of rolling hills and occasional oaks, the small monastery has served as a retreat center for people of all walks of life for more than 50 years.

As you wind up the two-mile dirt road from Highway 1 to the monastery grounds, you're awed by the ever-increasing expanse of ocean below, the rugged slant of the Santa Lucia mountain range falling into the sea, and the silence—that powerful silence. And it was one particular speaker's love of the monastery's silence that finally convinced Michelle three years ago in a communication course to sign up for an overnight retreat.

It was in her public speaking class that Michelle heard an older student deliver a persuasive speech convincing students to visit the Camaldolese monastery for two days of silence. Like the other students in class, Michelle was told that such a visit would quiet her mind and relax her body. The speaker provided a number of statistics and a few expert opinions to support her points.

But it was the speaker's third point about the silence and how it soothes the soul that finally moved Michelle from reluctance to willingness, from skeptic to believer. It was the speaker's description of a silence so powerful, so foreign, so healing that one is gradually transformed by the experience. And sometimes in the process, one is even moved to tears as the sounds of civilization are silenced and the voice of heaven whispers.

A few days after hearing the speech, Michelle made the call to the monastery south of Big Sur, and she has continued to make the call every six months since to venture into silence and once again hear the voice of heaven whisper.

*Speech is power to  
persuade, to convert,  
and to compel.*

—RALPH WALDO  
EMERSON

We are bombarded daily by persuasive appeals to purchase this product, contribute to that charity, or subscribe to this belief. We in turn try to convince someone to babysit our kids, ask the boss for a raise, or request the neighbor to turn down his stereo. Daily, we must deal with hundreds of persuasive events, whether we are conscious of them or not. Your ability to convince others and motivate them to action will, to a large extent, determine the quality and destiny of your life and the lives of those around you.

## 9.1 Basics of Persuasion

*Persuasion* is the process of trying to get others to change their beliefs or behavior. Unlike informative speaking, for which the goal is the sharing of information, persuasion is aimed at going a step further—changing others. This process of changing—and not simply sharing—is the focus of this chapter.

### Three Purposes of Persuasion

In persuasive speaking, there are three purposes we can attempt to achieve with an audience, although most persuasive appeals utilize a combination of all three. The persuasive purposes are to reinforce an already-held belief, change a belief, and motivate to action.

The first persuasive purpose is to *reinforce an already-held belief*. This is the goal of our persuasive appeals if we're speaking on such topics as "Everyone Should Vote" or "The Cure for AIDS Must Be Found." These are beliefs that are held by the majority of any group, and your speech will be directed to reinforcing or strengthening those beliefs.

A second persuasive purpose is to *change an audience belief*. This would be your goal if you were speaking on such topics as "We Should Ban Air Conditioning in Cars" or "We Should Have a Flat Tax." These beliefs are not held by the majority of your audience, and your goal in these instances would be to change their beliefs.

The final persuasive purpose is to *motivate to action*. This would be your goal if you were speaking on such topics as "Contribute Money to the Red Cross" or "Attend This Evening's City Council Meeting." The primary purpose in speeches like these is to get the audience members to actually do something.

Whether your goal is to reinforce a belief, change a belief, or motivate the audience to action, it should be clearly indicated in your proposition.

### The Proposition

In persuasive speaking, the specific purpose, purpose statement, or goal statement is called the proposition. The *proposition* is the desired effect you want to have on your audience. What exactly is it that you want your audience to believe or do? Many persuasive attempts are doomed from the beginning because the speaker does not know exactly what she wants from the audience. A properly constructed proposition can ensure this clarity and specificity.

A proposition must be limited to one sentence. The intent and goal of the persuasive speech must be contained in that sentence. How do you want the audience to

respond? If you want to strengthen an already-held belief, you must phrase your proposition accordingly. For example, "to strengthen the audience's belief that everyone should take regular vacations" and "to reinforce the audience's belief that child abuse

is a terrible crime" are two propositions that attempt to strengthen already-held beliefs.

*It is terrible to speak  
well and be wrong.*  
—SOPHOCLES

You can phrase your proposition to reflect a desire to change the audience's beliefs. For instance, "to convince the audience that we should not permit freedom of the press" and "to convince the audience that we should

abolish home mortgage interest deductions on federal income tax" are two propositions that seek to change audience beliefs.

Finally, you can phrase your proposition to motivate your audience to action. Propositions such as "to persuade the audience to volunteer as a Big Brother or Big Sister" and "to motivate the audience to donate blood at the annual company blood drive" are seeking to get the listeners to do something.

A poorly phrased proposition will hinder your efforts to organize and deliver an effective persuasive appeal. Make certain that your proposition contains a clear and specific purpose and goal. When you are constructing your proposition, consider the following three suggestions:

**Your proposition should meet an audience need.** Your proposition will be more likely to succeed if you consider the needs of your particular audience and design your proposition around those needs. If a person has a need for a computer, he will be more likely to receive a message on computers. If a person needs employment, he will be more likely to receive a message on employment opportunities or interviewing techniques. Your ability to analyze and consider audience needs will be valuable when deciding on your proposition.

**Your proposition should be reasonable.** To ask that each member of your audience donate \$10,000 to a charitable organization or that they jog 10 miles a day is probably asking for more than most people are willing to give. Your proposition should be phrased with a reasonable goal in mind. It's the old "foot-in-the-door" technique; you begin by asking for something small and reasonable, and then you build your argument or persuasive appeal to include more comprehensive objectives. Remember: in all things, moderation.

**Your proposition should be simple.** The more complex your proposition is, the more likely you are to confuse your audience. A multiple proposition can even have a counterproductive effect on your listeners. The proposition "to persuade the audience to rethink their current belief that milk is good for them, to believe that natural juices provide greater benefit to their overall physical and psychological health, and to invest in a one-week vacation at the Nirvana Health Food Resort" would not only be overwhelming in terms of evidence required, but it also would place too much *demand on the audience* in terms of the sheer amount of persuasion asked for. A more manageable proposition might be "to convince the audience to drink natural juices" or "to persuade the audience to drink less milk." Keep it simple.

## 9.2 Aristotle's Three Persuasive Proofs

Now that we've examined the persuasive purposes and the proposition, we can introduce the three persuasive proofs. More than 2,000 years ago, Aristotle divided all persuasive effort into three categories: *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. *Ethos* is the ethical appeal or credibility of the speaker. *Logos* is the logical appeal. And *pathos* is the emotional appeal. We now examine how each of these three dimensions of persuasion can help you change and motivate others.

### Ethos (Speaker Credibility)

Aristotle believed that the most important component of persuasion was the perceived credibility of the speaker or her ethical appeal. Is the speaker someone who can be trusted? Someone who has our best interests at heart? Someone who sounds like she knows what she's talking about? These and related questions shape our opinion of a speaker and will directly affect our response to her appeal. *Ethos* is the perceived credibility of the speaker. *Ethos*, or speaker credibility, consists of the speaker's competence, goodwill, and character.

The speaker's expertise or experience is called *competence*. We will generally listen to and believe a speaker we perceive as trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in a given subject or discipline area. A physician's knowledge, training, and experience all contribute to her overall competence in the field of medicine. The expertise of the knowledgeable professor makes him more believable than a professor who displays a poor command of the material. Your competence as a speaker can be enhanced by speaking on topics you have previous experience with or training in. You can also increase your perceived competence by providing your listeners with evidence and research from experts in the subject area you are discussing.

The second component of *ethos* is *goodwill*. We will generally believe people we like. Goodwill is the dimension of the speaker that deals with interpersonal warmth, friendliness, and enthusiasm. One of the reasons we like puppies is that they show friendliness and boundless energy toward us. If a speaker is cold, aloof, and condescending, our usual response is to reject that person. Some research suggests that the perceived goodwill of the speaker is the most important of the three elements of credibility.

How can you increase your sense of goodwill? First, show enthusiasm. Speakers who talk in a lifeless monotone, as if they were delivering a funeral eulogy, are generally received in similar fashion. Be enthusiastic in your nonverbal communication! Show some life! What goes around, comes around. Second, be friendly *toward your audience*. Use a speech style that is warm and friendly. Be personable. Smile. And third, use humor when appropriate. There's something about well-received humor that increases liking and attraction.

The third component of *ethos* is the speaker's character. *Character* is the overall makeup of a person. It's what the speaker is made of. Honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness are major elements of a person's character, and if the speaker seems to

Example is not the main  
thing in influencing others.  
It is the only thing.  
—ALBERT SCHWEITZER

possess these traits, we are more likely to believe him than if he does not. An audience member must feel that she can trust and respect the speaker before she will be persuaded by that speaker.

What, then, can you do to be perceived as possessing an honest and trustworthy character? Here are some suggestions. First, be truthful. Don't exaggerate points. Present your views fairly. Second, share your motives with the audience. Tell the audience why you are taking the position you are taking. Even if they disagree with you, they will appreciate your candidness. Third, establish common ground with your audience. An audience will more likely feel better about you if you possess similar beliefs, values, attitudes, and experiences. Finally, dress appropriately. Your audience bases much of their evaluation of you by the manner in which you dress.

***Increasing Speaker Ethos*** Speaker goodwill and character are two of the traits of ethos. You can increase your level of goodwill toward your audience and develop your character in the process by focusing your attention and efforts on your audience rather than on yourself.

Here are some ways you can increase your ethos as you prepare for and deliver any speech. The first three suggestions are not readily visible to your audience, but their impact will influence how you think and feel and, thus, how you deliver your speech. The remaining suggestions visually demonstrate your goodwill to your audience as you speak.

**Research your audience.** Before you speak, gather as much information about your audience as you can. Interview the speaking event contact person, conduct a site visit to the group or organization, or e-mail an audience survey in order to gather relevant information that will make your upcoming speech tailored to their interests and needs.

**Consider your audience.** In the weeks and days prior to your speaking event, focus your attention on your audience. Consider how you will be providing them with information that will make their lives better. Remember that you either enlarge or diminish others with your words. So think about the audience every day for a few minutes. Meditate on your audience. Pray for your audience if you're so inclined. Your time and effort will be worth it.

**Connect with your audience before you speak.** You might want to add a personal touch if your audience is small (20 to 30 people) by contacting them directly through e-mail, social media, or a good old-fashioned letter. This requires considerable effort, but it's worth it.

I've spoken at small conferences of 40 to 50-attendees where I've sent personal, handwritten letters to each individual one week before I was scheduled to speak. It was a lot of work to write a couple of sentences of welcome and good wishes to each audience member, but you would not believe the warm and enthusiastic welcome I received even before the audience was seated in the conference room. Reach out and touch someone before you speak.

**Dress up.** One obvious way you can increase your credibility with the audience is to dress up a little more than you normally would. That doesn't mean a suit and tie or an evening gown, but you should be one of the best-dressed people at the

speaking event. You are the speaker for goodness' sake. Act like one, ... I mean, dress like one.

**Arrive early and mingle.** Arrive at the speaking event 30 minutes earlier than you are expected. This gives you time to check out the speaking room or auditorium before the audience arrives. It's also a good to locate the drinking fountain, restroom, and emergency exit in case the audience really dislikes your speech. Plus, you'll have a few minutes alone to collect yourself, breathe, and focus your attention and spirit in the right direction.

**Be respectful in your delivery.** As you are delivering your speech, be respectful of your audience. Use encouraging, supportive, and gracious language when addressing your audience. Don't use obscene, vulgar, or disrespectful language. You want to be a speaker who demonstrates the highest standards of ethical and respectful delivery. We're talking about your character on public display when you address an audience. So always take the high road and be respectful in your delivery.

**Be the last to leave.** Although some speakers want to be treated like royalty and be rushed off stage to their waiting limousine amid the thunderous applause. I would suggest that you stick around, answer questions, and chat with those audience members who honor you with their presence as they line up to shake your hand. In fact, be the last one to leave—after you've helped clean up, thanked the appropriate support folks, and tied up any loose ends with the speaking event contact person. Be the first one to arrive and the last one to leave. Talk about ethos ....

**Express your thanks.** Remember to write a thank-you note and send it via snail mail (the U.S. postal service) to the group or organization that sponsored or hired you to speak. Also write a separate thank-you card to the contact person who assisted you. Have a grateful heart. It not only builds friendships, but it also builds your character. Public speaking is more than just speaking in front of an audience. It develops and expresses your ethos.

## Logos (Logical Appeal)

The second component of persuasion is logos. *Logos* is the logical appeal or the reasoning process presented by the speaker. *Reasoning* is the process of drawing conclusions from evidence. You will recall that evidence takes the form of either statistics or expert testimony. Let's examine the two basic forms of the reasoning process: deductive and inductive reasoning.

*Deductive reasoning* moves from a general rule or premise and applies it to a specific case. The flow is from the general to the specific, from big to small. An example of deductive reasoning would be

1. Mary is a member of a church. (*premise*)
2. Therefore, Mary believes in God. (*specific conclusion*)

In most deductive reasoning, one of the premises is not stated. This is called an *enthymeme*. Let's look at the reasoning again and include the missing premise:

1. Members of a church believe in God. (*major premise*)
2. Mary is a member of a church. (*minor premise*)
3. Therefore, Mary believes in God. (*specific conclusion*)

When all three steps of the deductive reasoning process are stated, as in the preceding example, it is called a *sylllogism*.

Let's see if you can fill in the missing part in the following syllogism:

1. All human beings are mortal.
2. Travis is a human being.
3. Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_.

(How was that? The answer is "Travis is mortal.")

Try to complete the missing information in this example:

1. All divorced people have been married.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Therefore, John has been married.

(Was this one easy for you? The answer to the minor premise is "John is divorced.")

Now, let's see how the syllogism can be used to test the deductive logic of a speech. Suppose that you want to convince your audience that automobile air conditioning units are destroying our atmosphere. The syllogism would look something like this:

**Major Premise.** Freon gas destroys the earth's ozone layer.

**Minor Premise.** Most automobile air conditioning units leak significant amounts of freon into the atmosphere.

**Conclusion.** Therefore, automobile air conditioning units are destroying the earth's ozone layer.

Now that you have constructed the syllogism, you will need to research and present evidence—both statistical and expert testimony—that will prove your major and minor premises to your audience. These can serve as the content for the first two points of your persuasive speech. If you succeed in getting your audience to agree with your major and minor premises, they should accept your conclusion. If used correctly, deductive logic can be an effective persuasive tool.

Whereas deductive reasoning moves from the general to the specific, *inductive reasoning* uses the opposite strategy. It examines specific examples or facts and then draws a general conclusion. Inductive reasoning moves from the small to the large, from the specific to the general.

Suppose you have owned three mutt dogs in your life, and each one of those mixed-breed dogs was friendly, well behaved, and healthy. From your experience and observation of those three specific dogs, you could arrive at the general conclusion that all mutt dogs make great pets. If you read statistics asserting that married couples who communicated regularly stayed married longer than couples who did not, you might conclude that regular communication is an important requirement for a long marriage. In both cases, you moved from specific observations or evidence to a general conclusion.

*The less men think,  
the more they talk.*  
—MONTESQUIEU

In the case in which your experience with three different mutt dogs led you to conclude that all mixed-breed dogs make great pets, you were using the inductive reasoning process. In other words, you said to



yourself that what is true in some instances is true in all instances. This is a common form of inductive reasoning used by speakers.

In the second example of communication and marriage length, you were using *reasoning by statistics*, another form of inductive reasoning. Different pieces of statistical evidence, each pointing to the same conclusion, led to the belief that regular communication is important to a long-lasting marriage. Reasoning by statistics isn't readily accepted by all people, however. There are many who are suspicious of anything that resembles numerical data, and there is some basis for their skepticism. Statistics can be presented and interpreted in a variety of ways that can be misleading. Here are some suggestions for using statistics:

**Document your statistics orally.** If your audience is not familiar with the statistics you will be presenting, you need to document the evidence *before* you share it with your audience. You should cite the author, source, and date of the research. It can be cited as simply as:

"Dr. Joe Yamato, in his book, *Dangers of Sugar*, published in 2009, warns . . ."

or

"In the article 'Top Swimmers in America,' Terrin Flores reported in the current edition of *Sports Illustrated* that . . ."

**Build the ethos of the source/author.** If the author or researcher is not familiar to your audience, you may wish to spend a few moments building the ethos or credibility of the person. Do this *before* you document the evidence. Here's a brief example:

"Terrin Flores has been a sportswriter for 22 years. She has specialized in swimming sports and has interviewed all the biggest Olympic swimming stars in the past 18 years." (ethos building) . . . (pause) . . .

"In the article 'Top Swimmers in America,' Terrin Flores reported in the current edition of *Sports Illustrated* that . . ." (documentation)

**Give an adequate amount of statistics/expert testimony.** You should present at least one statistic or expert testimony to prove each main point of your speech. Don't go overboard, however. You can reach a point of diminishing returns, and an avalanche of statistics and expert testimony can overwhelm an audience. You need to be the judge of how much evidence to present to a particular audience.

**Provide quality evidence.** Your evidence should reflect the best possible research available. Are the authors credible? Are the sources of the information—books, magazines, periodicals—credible? If the quality of your information is questionable, the impact of your speech is jeopardized.

**Provide recent evidence.** Present research that is recent. Whenever possible, give research that is no more than five years old. The more recent the evidence is, the more credible it is to your audience.

**Provide relevant evidence.** Test your evidence to ensure that it does indeed support your proposition or main point. After you have presented a piece

of evidence, your audience should not have to ask themselves the question, "So what? What did that evidence have to do with the point he was trying to make?" Make the relevance of your evidence clear.

**Restate your evidence in your own words.** After you have stated your evidence or your expert testimony, it is important that you pause for a moment and then restate the information in your own words. This gives the audience another chance to be exposed to the data in a different way. Watch how the speaker restates the evidence in the following example:

"The study indicated that 16 percent of women showed signs of stress, whereas 33 percent of the men in the experiment displayed stress." (evidence) . . . (pause) . . . "What this means is that twice as many men as women exhibited stress in the test." (restatement)

**Translate your evidence into a picture.** Sometimes the evidence you present is difficult to envision or comprehend. In such instances, it is important to translate or interpret the evidence in terms that are more readily understood or visualized by your listeners. Notice how the translation of the statistic provides a clearer picture. "The NASA space capsule weighs 120,000 pounds. That's the equivalent of 48 Toyota pickups!"

**Other Forms of Reasoning.** There are three other forms of reasoning we should briefly mention because they are often used in persuasive appeals logic. They are reasoning by analogy, reasoning by causation, and reasoning by definition.

*Reasoning by analogy* is a reasoning attempt that shows that similar circumstances produce similar conclusions. This is a special form of reasoning by generalization. Suppose that Company A went bankrupt last year, and you show that the circumstances of Company A were similar to those of Company B. From that, you could assert that Company B will also go bankrupt. Because its circumstances are similar, it will suffer a similar fate. Another example of reasoning by analogy is, "You're just like your brother, and you'll end up in jail just like he did." Pretty grim, huh?

*Reasoning by causation* assumes that every cause has an effect. When two things occur together frequently, we often assume that one caused the other. Let's say that every time you go swimming, you get a headache. After a while, you might conclude that the swimming caused the headache. The *independent variable*, the swimming, causes the *dependent variable*, the headache. You need to be careful, however, about drawing such conclusions. Is there always a relationship between the two variables? Does the independent variable always precede the dependent variable? And could there be other variables (*confounding variables*) involved that you're not aware of, such as after swimming you always drink three warm glasses of brandy to ward off the cold? That could cause a headache for anyone. Be careful when you draw a conclusion when reasoning by causation.

And finally, *reasoning by definition* is another form of logic that needs to be mentioned. When a situation has all the characteristics that are usually associated with a term, we can then use the term to describe the product of those characteristics. That is reasoning by definition. For example, if Joe's Diner has delicious food,

great service, and reasonable prices, we can say the restaurant is an excellent one. Because good food, great service, and reasonable prices are all characteristics of an excellent restaurant, we can apply that term to Joe's Diner. Once again, be careful when using this form of logic. Sure, Joe's Diner satisfies those three criteria presented, but what about the sanitation of the kitchen, the location of the restaurant, and the overall atmosphere of the place? Be careful with this form of reasoning also.

*Statistics are no substitute  
for judgment.*  
—HENRY CLAY

## Pathos (Emotional Appeal)

Do you always base your decisions on sound reasoning and well-researched evidence? Where to vacation? Which car to buy? Where to go to dinner? Whom to invite to your party? Where to live? Whom to marry? Should you have children? Should you stay married? These and thousands of other questions confront you during your lifetime.

How do you make these decisions? Do you decide on the basis of advice from others, as you consider their credibility or ethos? Perhaps you base your decisions on logical reasoning and thorough research by emphasizing logos or logical proof. Or do you base your decisions on your "gut feelings," relying primarily on how you feel emotionally about an issue? Most people probably use a combination of all three in decisions of magnitude or importance, but research has shown that much decision making is ultimately based on emotional responses, personal tastes, needs, and desires.

The third and final persuasive proof is what Aristotle referred to as pathos, or emotional appeal. *Pathos* appeals to the listener's needs, desires, and wishes. Whereas logos, or logical appeal, aims for the listener's head, pathos directs its efforts toward the listener's heart. In addition to providing logical reasoning, supported by sound evidence, and presenting yourself as a credible speaker, you must appeal to the emotions of your audience in your persuasive speech.

**Hierarchy of Needs.** Because emotional appeals deal with an individual's psychological needs, we should begin with an examination of the various needs. An introduction to this area is Abraham Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*, a psychological model of need structure depicting the lowest-level physical needs to the highest-level actualization needs.

The lowest level of the hierarchy is our *physical needs*, such as our need for food, water, air, sleep, and physical comfort. Our most basic requirements to get adequate oxygen to breathe, food to eat, and water to drink are often taken for granted, unless we are drowning, starving, or dying of thirst. Our audience will most likely have these most basic needs met, so a persuasive speech based primarily on the satisfaction of this level of need is not usually advised.

The second level on the hierarchy is *safety needs*. Safety needs not only include physical safety, such as freedom from illness, disease, and violence, but they also include having a job, a place to call home, a sense of stability and order, and a lawful environment. Many persuasive appeals can be generated from this level of safety needs.

*All learning has an  
emotional base.*  
—PLATO

*Belonging needs* serve as the third level of needs. These include the need to be loved by a significant other and the need for family and friends. They also include the need to belong to a group of people who share your interests and activities, such as a church, an interest group, a pottery class, and even a motorcycle club. They can also include the need to belong to a political movement, a nation, or even the human race.

The fourth level is *self-esteem needs*. The assumption here is that people need to feel good about themselves. They need to feel they are worthwhile, attractive, capable, and skilled. People will invest a great amount of energy, effort, and money in activities that will enhance their self-esteem. Self-help books, diet centers, graduate schools, promotions at work, meditation retreats, jewelry stores, exclusive designer clothing boutiques, and a thousand other self-esteem-enhancing sources cry out to us. This level of needs is rich in emotional-appeal material.

*Self-actualization* involves realizing one's highest potential. It is placed at the top level of the hierarchy of needs. We have a need to be the best we can with what we have been given. To be the best parent possible, the best teacher, the best spouse; to write that book we've been thinking about for years; or to learn to fly an airplane.

A woman returned to school after having been away from formal education for more than 25 years. Even though she was at the age when most people retire from work, she wanted to begin her college education to become a chiropractor. After raising three children by herself and saving for her college education, she was ready to accomplish what she had dreamed of for years. This woman was striving for self-actualization—realizing her highest desire, to become a person who helps heal others.

Some of the best emotional-appeal stories you can include in your speech will come from the lives of individuals who have sought to realize their highest potential. When you are researching emotional appeals for your persuasive speech, remember the various needs of your audience members.

***Specific Emotional Targets.*** You should consider five other areas when preparing your emotional appeals to a particular audience. They are sex, conformity, wealth, pleasure, and personal growth.

Appealing to the motive of *sex* is one of the most popular strategies utilized by the advertising industry. Every other advertisement has an attractive man or woman fondling products from cars to fertilizer. Our desire to be attractive to others makes for a powerful motivational appeal. Beneath the motive of sex is a deeper need for intimacy, belonging, and love. These needs all provide rich areas to explore for emotional appeals.

*Conformity* is one of the most powerful needs we have. The need to appear and behave like others is a potent motivational force, affecting young and old alike. Often, the appeal can take the form of avoiding nonconforming behavior or being different from everyone else. "You wouldn't want to be the only person in your neighborhood who didn't have attractive landscaping!" and "How would it feel to be the only person who didn't contribute, when all of your colleagues had?" are examples of this technique.

Another specific target that is especially effective with audiences is *wealth*. Wealth not only includes the desire to possess piles of money, diamonds, and gold; it also encompasses an individual's need to earn, save, and invest money. It can speak to a desire to spend money wisely and prevent its loss. Appeals to wealth can prove beneficial in moving your audiences emotionally.

Another motive you should consider is that of *pleasure*. Most people like doing things that bring them happiness, enjoyment, and pleasure. Use appeals that point out or highlight how your proposition will provide them with pleasure.

*Personal growth* is the individual's need or desire to examine life, explore different aspects of selfhood, and, ideally, make strides toward growing as a human being. The emphasis is on becoming different from what we were in the past and exploring new ways of living and being. The introvert becomes the extrovert, the thinker becomes the feeler, and the bodybuilder becomes the spiritual seeker. The focus is on process and growth. This need to expand, change, and grow is one of the most potent of all personal needs to appeal to in your audience. It was the reason this book was written.

## Suggestions for Using Emotional Appeals

When using emotional appeals, consider the following suggestions:

**Select appropriate emotional appeals.** You must analyze your topic and audience carefully and then research appropriate emotionally appealing material that will support your proposition and appeal to the needs of the audience.

**Establish common ground with the audience.** An audience will more likely listen to your emotional appeals if they feel you have things in common with them. During the first half of your talk, usually in the introduction, relate to common experiences, values, beliefs, and circumstances that will establish common ground with your listeners.

**Use the yes-response.** The audience must ultimately agree with your point of view if you are to be successful in your persuasive speech. One effective technique that can lay the groundwork in the beginning for such an agreeable climate is the *yes-response*—a series of rhetorical questions constructed so that the audience is likely to answer “yes.” As the audience silently considers each question, they begin to get into a more agreeable state of mind. Listen to the series of questions this speaker uses for a speech on increasing the size of the police force in a certain town as he utilizes the *yes-response*.

“Do you want a town that is free from crime?”

“Would you like to be able to walk the streets at night again?”

“And wouldn't you want to feel safe in your own neighborhood?”

*Kindness has influenced  
more people than  
eloquence.*  
—GANDHI

**Use emotional appeal at the end of the body of your speech.** If you are going to fully develop an emotional appeal, such as a story or long illustration, do so toward the end of your speech. The final main point in the body of your speech is the most appropriate place to include a detailed story. The first two main points should stress evidence and expert opinion as you present your arguments, but save the final point for material that is especially appealing to the emotions of the audience.

**Match your nonverbal behavior with your appeal.** Your body movement, gestures, voice, and facial expressions should reinforce the emotional appeals you are using. If your material is sad, look, talk, and move as if you are

sad. If the material is joyous, look, talk, and move as if you are joyous. Don't give your audience mixed messages. Use your nonverbal communication to add credibility and impact to your verbal message.

**Use pauses in your delivery.** One common mistake speakers commit when delivering emotional appeals is forgetting to give the audience time to digest the material. Use pauses after you've delivered a powerful line of dialogue. A two- or three-second pause will give your audience time to consider what you have just said. It places emphasis on your statement, and it gives you time to breathe. Use your pauses as you practice the speech. If you don't practice the speech with pauses, you will forget to use them when the real speech time arrives.

### 9.3 Types of Persuasive Speeches

Now that we have looked at the basics of persuasive speaking—ethical proof, logical proof, and emotional proof—we can examine the basic main-point outlines of various persuasive speeches. The introductions, conclusions, and subpoints of the following outlines have been omitted.

#### Speech of Reasons Approach

If your audience has no opinion, is neutral, or is only mildly in favor or mildly opposed to your proposition, you can use the *speech of reasons* approach. This simple method of persuasive speaking is best suited for these audiences.

*Proposition: You should exercise regularly.*

- I. Regular exercise will improve your physical health.
- II. Regular exercise will improve your psychological well-being.
- III. Regular exercise will improve your chances of living a long life.

#### Problem-Solution Approach

If you want your audience to consider the adoption of a specific plan or solution to a problem, you can use the *problem-solution* approach. This works best with an audience that has no opinion, is neutral, or is only mildly in favor or mildly opposed to your proposition.

*Proposition: You should support the 8 percent federal income tax plan.*

- I. The current federal income tax is unfair.
- II. The proposed 8 percent federal income tax will tax all citizens equally.
- III. The proposed 8 percent federal income tax is the best solution to our tax problem.

#### Criteria-Satisfaction Approach

If your audience is hostile to your proposition, the criteria-satisfaction approach can be effective because it utilizes the yes-response as you have them agree with your criteria

for a satisfactory solution. It also seeks to establish common ground with your hostile audience because you stipulate criteria that are agreeable to speaker and audience.

*Proposition: You should attend a community college.*

- I. You want a college that meets these criteria.
  - A. It must offer a wide variety of courses.
  - B. It must offer individualized instructional support.
  - C. It must be affordable.
- II. The community college meets these criteria.
  - A. It offers a wide variety of courses.
  - B. It offers individualized instructional support.
  - C. It is affordable.

#### Negative Method Approach

If your audience is hostile, the *negative method* can be especially effective because the structure forces the audience to realize that there is no other option than the one you propose. Your main-point structure eliminates the other options as viable solutions.

*Proposition: You should save money for the future.*

- I. Your current level of savings is inadequate.
- II. The social security system will be bankrupt.
- III. Your earning power will diminish in coming years.
- IV. The only solution is to save money now for the future.

#### Monroe's Motivated Sequence

The final persuasive speech pattern is *Monroe's Motivated Sequence*, developed by speech professor Alan Monroe in the 1930s. This is a popular and highly effective persuasive speech pattern for moving audiences to action. It is based on a developmental model of persuasion, each step building on the previous step. This pattern is especially useful if you are seeking immediate action or results from your audience. Monroe's Motivated Sequence has five steps: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

**Step 1: Gain Attention.** In the first step, you gain the audience's attention and focus it on the specific problem at hand. You can achieve this by audience questions, stories, startling statistics or facts, and visual aids or by making specific references of connection to the audience. If you gain their attention effectively, the audience will be ready and willing to listen to your speech.

**Step 2: Establish Need.** In the second step, you make the audience feel a need for change by showing that there is a serious problem to solve. Your audience should feel that something must be done or has to be learned because of the need you presented and developed. This can be achieved with the following three steps:

1. State the need that exists or will exist.
2. Illustrate this need with examples, statistics, and expert testimony.
3. Show how this need affects your specific listeners.

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1. State the need that exists or will exist.
2. Illustrate this need with examples, statistics, and expert testimony.
3. Show how this need affects your specific listeners.



**Step 3: Satisfy the Need.** Once you have gained the audience's attention and proved a relevant need that is personally important to them, you are ready to propose a way to satisfy this need. It is in this satisfaction step that you present your solution to the problem. This is the most important step in the sequence—providing your audience with a solution to reinforce or change their attitudes and beliefs or motivate them to action. Be as specific as possible when you propose the attitude or belief you want them to adopt or the course of action you want them to take.

**Step 4: Visualize the Need Satisfied.** After you have presented your solution to the problem, you strengthen the audience's beliefs and feelings by having them actually see or visualize how your solution will benefit them. You are now moving your audience from the present into the future. One way you can achieve this is to describe what the positive future will look like if your proposal is adopted. Use specific examples and illustrations when describing this brighter future. Another way you can achieve a similar result is to describe a worse future if they fail to adopt your solution to the problem.

*The great end of life is not  
knowledge, but action.*  
—THOMAS FULLER

**Step 5: Ask for Action.** The final step of the motivated sequence is to make a direct request of your audience. You want your audience to move in a specific direction, either in thought or action. State exactly what you want your audience to do or believe, providing specific guidelines as to how they will achieve the desired results. Use strong emotional appeals during this final step. This is the time to be direct, positive, and forceful.

Here's a brief example of Monroe's Motivated Sequence:

- I. **Attention:** A local child is killed by a drunk driver.
- II. **Need:** You or someone you love could be killed or injured by a drunk driver.
- III. **Satisfaction:** Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) is a national organization that brings attention to this serious problem and supports legislation to get drunk drivers off the road.
- IV. **Visualization:** Imagine our highways without drunk drivers where you and your loved ones are safe.
- V. **Action:** I want you to support MADD with a \$10 donation this month.

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## SAMPLE PERSUASIVE OUTLINE

### STOP USING CREDIT CARDS

*Proposition: To persuade the audience to stop using credit cards.*

#### Introduction

This past year, a rather traumatic event happened to a good friend of mine—she and her husband were forced to file for bankruptcy due to excessive credit card debt. They lost many of their worldly possessions in the process, and their credit rating was ruined for the next several years. Did you know that Americans currently owe in excess of \$540 billion in credit card debt and that the forecast for the future is that this debt will only increase because of our addiction to the mighty credit card? Today, I want you to quit using credit cards

because it will save your money, your sanity, and your future. Let's examine each of these powerful reasons.

### Body

- I. The first reason you should give up credit cards is to save money.
  - A. It will eliminate high annual fees.
  - B. It will eliminate high annual interest rates.
  - C. It will reduce unnecessary spending.
    1. According to Gerri Detweiler in her book, *The Ultimate Credit Handbook*, "Credit card companies recognize human nature and play upon the fact that credit cards make it easy to overextend ourselves."
    2. Story about my friends overextending themselves on credit cards.
- II. The second reason you should give up credit cards is to save your sanity.
  - A. It reduces your worry over unnecessary spending.
  - B. It reduces your anxiety over ever-increasing debt.
    1. Margorie Hillis, in her book, *Orchids on Your Budget*, warns that credit card debt will destroy your peace of mind.
    2. This anxiety can express itself in physical ailments.
  - C. It gives you more time to think about more positive things in life.
- III. The third reason you should give up credit cards is to save your future.
  - A. It can prevent future bankruptcy.
    1. Mike Yorkey, in his book, *Real Solutions for Getting Out of Debt*, explains that "giving up credit cards is a real prevention against future bankruptcy."
    2. Story about Josh Ling being saved from bankruptcy.
  - B. It helps maintain excellent future credit ratings.
    1. Sean Mills, credit counselor, says that "living within your budget and not using your credit cards can insure a good credit rating."
    2. List Sean Mills's life goals for your money future.
  - C. It can foster a healthy attitude toward future spending.

### Conclusion

Today, I've given you three excellent reasons why you should give up using credit cards—it will save your money, your sanity, and your future. So begin your path to financial health and spiritual freedom by actually cutting up your credit cards in a hundred pieces and getting the pieces of your life put back into place. Proverbs warns us that "A fool and his money are soon parted." Be wise and part with those credit cards and not your money!

### References

- Detweiler, G. 2003. *The Ultimate Credit Handbook*. New York: Jeremy Thatcher/Putman.
- Hillis, M. 2010. *Orchids on Your Budget*. London: Virago.Books.
- Mills, S. Mar. 11, 2009. Credit counselor, San Jose, CA. (408) 767-1112.
- Yorkey, M. 2002. *Real Solutions for Getting Out of Debt*. Ventura, CA: Vine Books.

## SAMPLE KEY WORD OUTLINE

### Introduction

Bankrupt couple story

Eliminating credit cards saves money, sanity, future

**Body**

- I. *Saves money*
  - Eliminates annual fees
  - Eliminates high interest rates
  - Reduces spending (Detweiler reference 1)
- II. *Saves sanity*
  - Reduces worry
  - Reduces anxiety (Hillis reference 2)
  - Provides time
- III. *Saves future*
  - Prevents bankruptcy (Yorkey reference 3)
  - Maintains credit rating (Mills reference 4)
  - Healthy spending attitude

**Conclusion**

Eliminating credit cards saves money, sanity; future proverbs quotation

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## COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

### PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

**1. The most persuasive speaker**

Who is the most persuasive speaker you have ever heard? What made this individual so persuasive? How did this person's ethos, logos, and pathos influence or shape your response to him or her? What personality characteristics and delivery skills do you share with this individual? What delivery skills and personality characteristics are different?

**2. A topic or belief you would die for**

One of the most difficult assignments for the novice speaker is to select a persuasive topic. A method that is helpful in choosing such a topic is to ask yourself the questions, "What (if anything) would I die for?" and "What would I risk my life for?" These two questions could provide some possible topics for your talk. If you discover that you wouldn't die for anything, or at least risk your life for something, maybe you should stick to informative speaking. Persuasive speaking—really good persuasive speaking—usually involves a speaker who is committed to something, stands for something, and is willing to sacrifice for something.

**3. Outlining persuasive main points**

Select one of your topics or ideas from Exercise 2 ("A topic or belief you would die for") and brainstorm 10 reasons that support this proposition. In other words, give 10 reasons why your audience should accept your particular topic or belief. To help you generate your list of reasons, consider ethical, philosophical, spiritual, economic, physical, and psychological reasons why your listeners would benefit from your proposition. From your list of 10 reasons, select the three best reasons when considering the four categories of audience analysis.

#### 4. Analyzing a persuasive appeal

Select three full-page ads from one of your favorite magazines and examine each ad for the kinds of persuasive appeals it is attempting to evoke in the reader.

- Use Aristotle's three proofs (ethos, logos, and pathos) or Maslow's hierarchy of needs to identify and discuss the persuasive appeals found in each of the three ads you selected.

### CLASS ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Group discussion: Advertising campaign

Divide the class into groups of five or six. Each group is to design a simple one-page advertisement attempting to get high school seniors to enroll in a public speaking course during their first semester in college. Use any of the information in this chapter to give you ideas as you design this one-page ad. Be prepared to present your ad to the entire class. Your instructor may have each group write and/or draw its ad on an overhead transparency so it can be viewed by all the students.

#### 2. "I want you to" speech

Prepare, practice, and present a six- to eight-minute persuasive speech on the topic "I want you to ..." In this speech, you could persuade your audience to visit a place, contribute to a charity, enroll in a particular class, or read a certain book. It's up to you! Research the topic and interview experts in the field you are discussing. Develop each of your main points with documented information, examples, and strong emotional appeals. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

#### 3. Problem-solution speech

Prepare, practice, and present a six- to eight-minute persuasive speech discussing a problem of at least countywide importance and presenting a specific solution to that problem. Research the topic and interview experts in the field you are discussing. Make certain that you prove there is a problem and that your solution will solve the problem. Develop each of your main points with documented information, examples, and strong emotional appeals. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

#### 4. Monroe's Motivated Sequence speech

Prepare, practice, and present a six- to eight-minute persuasive speech using Monroe's Motivated Sequence (attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action). Research the topic and interview experts in the field you are discussing. Develop your main points with documented information, examples, and strong emotional appeals. Include any visual aids that might be helpful. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.