

COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT SKILL

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

-  Define communication
-  Define the components of communication
-  Explain the principles of communication
-  Explain the concept that attitude is more important than aptitude
-  List the communication skills for your life

Never before had Paul sat for so long in total silence with another human being. Paul, a young psychologist, was in a therapy session with his client, a middle-aged woman with lifeless eyes, arms that hung limply at her sides, and a posture that displayed the shame and anger that often accompany victims of physical abuse.

It was during Paul's first year of clinical training as a marriage, family, and child therapist that he had worked with her. The woman came to therapy with a long history of depression and withdrawal. As a novice therapist, Paul encouraged her to open up and share her feelings. But during the first two sessions, all the woman did was sit in silence. He asked the usual questions therapists are trained to ask, and she responded only with silence. She simply stared out the window at the peaceful mountains in the distance as the two of them sat in the small, cramped office.

During the course of therapy, she did make some progress. After two months, she responded in short sentences to some of Paul's questions. She even smiled a time or two. Yet, within four months, she quit coming to her sessions. Paul left messages on her answering machine inviting her back to therapy, but she did not respond. Paul never saw the woman again.

To this day, Paul is haunted by something she said at the end of one of her final sessions. After he asked her why she spent the vast majority of her time in therapy in silence, she slowly admitted, "Most times it's less painful to be silent than to talk. I think it would be much easier to live my entire life not having to communicate with anyone."

Can you imagine a life without communication? Immediately your existence would change in dramatic ways, leaving you with an entirely different life—an empty, hollow life.

No longer could you talk with friends over coffee or laugh with your family at a picnic. No longer could you whisper sweet nothings to your spouse or discuss the latest movie with a neighbor. No longer could you debate an issue at a business meeting or negotiate the price of a used car. No longer could you apologize for a wrong or ask for forgiveness from a wounded friend. In short, no longer would you be fully human. We need communication as a bridge to others in this life.

Hell was once described not as a burning pit of endless agony, but as a cold, lonely, isolated place where each person was sentenced to spend eternity alone on an island. No bridges between the islands. No way to span the gulf between people. Forever alone. A life without communication would be hell.

Once a human being has arrived on this earth, communication is the largest single factor in determining what happens to him in the world.
—VIRGINIA SATIR

1.1 What Is Communication?

Although there are numerous definitions for communication, the following definition is very simple and has been around for a long time. *Communication* is the process of sending and receiving messages. The sender sends a message through a channel, within a specific environment, to a receiver. The receiver responds with feedback to the sender; noise can interfere with the fidelity or accuracy of the message. Communication can be both verbal and nonverbal. *Verbal* communication consists of all language that is spoken and written, whereas *nonverbal* communication is all communication that is not spoken or written.

1.2 The Components of Communication

The communication process is made up of seven components. They are the sender, message, environment, channel, receiver, feedback, and noise.

Sender

The *sender* is the originator of the message. In other models of communication, the sender can also be called the source of the message. The process of communication begins at this point with a speaker who wishes to communicate an idea or feeling. It's important to note that the sender doesn't simply send a message. She must first decide what she wants to communicate and then encode the message. *Encoding* is the process of converting the message into language and terms that will be understood by the receiver. Once the message is encoded, it is sent to the receiver.

Message

The idea or feeling the sender wants to communicate is called the *message*. The message can be any idea, thought, emotion, or feeling the sender wishes to communicate.

Whether it's a flirtatious wink across a crowded room or a college commencement address, the message is still the thought or feeling the sender wants to communicate.

Environment

The *environment* includes the time, place, and occasion of the communication event. The time at which communication occurs can influence the communication between people. Talking to someone early in the morning or late at night can affect how we interact. The physical surroundings also play an important role. Is the communication event inside or outside? How does the lighting, temperature, arrangement of the furniture or chairs, size of the room, and a host of other physical variables influence the manner in which we communicate with others? The specific occasion for the event also determines to a large extent how we communicate. What is the purpose of the occasion? Is the occasion formal or informal? How many people are involved? These environmental variables need to be considered when we communicate.

Channel

The *channel* is the means by which a message is transmitted. Messages can be transmitted through channels of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. A sender can use a variety of channels to communicate her message. For instance, if she wants to communicate affection to someone special, she can choose to tell the person with words, hug the person, send cookies, write a letter, or offer perfume. In public speaking, the auditory and visual channels are used most often. But it's important to keep in mind that the more channels utilized by the sender, the more impact the message has on the receiver.

Receiver

The destination of the message is called the *receiver*. Without the receiver, communication does not occur. In public speaking, the receiver of the message is the audience. In the communication model, the receiver receives the message and then must decode the message. *Decoding* is the process of translating the message so that it has meaning for the receiver. A wink of the eye from the sender can be decoded or interpreted in many ways. It can be a nonverbal sign of flirting, a sign that there's dust in the eye, or even the first symptom of an epileptic seizure. The decoding process is vital in communication.

Speech is civilization itself.
—THOMAS MANN

Feedback

The response of the receiver to the sender is called *feedback*. Although feedback is really a message from the receiver to the sender, the term helps us see the circular movement of this communication model. It should be stressed that the receiver can send the return message through all the same channel options as the sender when she encodes and sends the response.

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Noise

Noise is any disturbance or interference in the communication process. *External noise* is any physical interference that diminishes or reduces the meaning of the message. Examples of external noise include background talking, a jackhammer banging outside the building, or even a distracting mannerism of the speaker. All of these and more can interfere with the communication process. Psychological or semantic interference, on the other hand, is called *internal noise*. Internal noise can cause us to misinterpret or decode the message in a way not intended. A word with multiple meanings is a common example of internal noise. For instance, an audience may interpret the speaker's statement, "In Japan, students respect their teachers," in a variety of ways depending on their individual interpretations of the word *respect*.

1.3 The Principles of Communication

Now that you have an idea of what communication is and the elements that make up the process, you are in a better position to examine some principles that govern communication.

You Cannot Not Communicate

Even when you don't think you're communicating, your nonverbal behavior is constantly giving off important messages. Your posture, your eye contact or lack of it, and the manner in which you walk or even sleep send messages loaded with meaning to the outside observer. Freud wisely observed, "He who has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips and betrayal oozes out of him at every pore." Your body, your movements, your use of time, the distance you stand from others, and even your clothes broadcast constant and powerful messages to observers. You are always communicating.

Communication Is Irreversible

Many times we wish we could retract a critical word or erase an angry response that we have made. Unfortunately, this is not possible. An apology for harsh words can be sincerely accepted, but the memory of the event can live on for the remainder of a person's life. Human memory is a funny thing. The least of gestures, the smallest of words can haunt us long after the event. It might be wise for us to remember the recommendation, "One seldom regrets unspoken words."

Communication Is a Process

Many years ago, Heraclitus observed, "You never step into the same river twice." The river has changed—the water clarity is different, the temperature is different, the current is different, the depth is different, and the width is different. The river may look the same, but it's a different river. In fact, you too have changed—the very cells of your body are different—since you last stepped into its waters.

This same principle holds true for communication. A smile might have worked while requesting something from a friend last week. But this week, the same smile elicits mild rejection. Why? Because you cannot repeat any event in exactly the same manner. Things have changed. Both participants have changed in countless subtle and not so subtle ways. It is impossible to replicate the hundreds of minute variables that influenced you just a week ago. Everything has changed to some degree during the week.

Have you ever seen the same movie twice? It's amazing how many new things you see the second time around that went unnoticed during your first viewing. Your emotional response to the film may also change because of the personal changes and emotional experiences you have had since you first saw the movie.

Communication is a process. Life is a process. The soldier who goes off to war returns a different person. The old woman dying in the city hospital bed is not the same person who ran along the country lane 70 years ago. That, however, is the beauty of life. As we get older, we can explore, experiment, change, and grow as we get older so that on our deathbed, we will have very few regrets.

Communication Is Learned

There are some nonverbal communication behaviors that seem to be universal, such as smiling and crying. But the majority of verbal and nonverbal communication is learned. The specific language that a child grows up with is learned early in childhood, as are the nonverbal communication behaviors that are appropriate for a specific culture. For instance, in U.S. culture, we value and encourage direct eye contact, especially in the public speaking arena. Yet a native of the Japanese culture would interpret the same direct eye contact as a sign of rudeness and lack of respect, especially when the speaker is addressing an individual of higher status.

Just as a fish is unaware of the water surrounding it, an individual might not be aware that communication is learned because he too is surrounded by the language and culture of his society. However, when a person learns a new language, visits a foreign country, or acquaints himself with a person from a different culture, he begins to realize that his way of talking and perceiving the world is but one of many. There are many realities out there, and perhaps one important indicator of maturity is the realization that "our way" isn't necessarily the only or best way.

The most important aspect of this principle is that ineffective ways of communicating can be replaced by learning new, more effective methods. People often think that because they can talk, they can communicate effectively, too. This is far from the truth. Ernest Hemingway once warned us "not to confuse motion for action." The same holds true for talking and communicating. Communicating effectively in our interpersonal and professional lives requires study and practice. Effective communication skills can be learned, and they must be learned if we are to experience a life that is meaningful and worth living.

Communication Needs to Be Cross-Culturally Appreciated

Perhaps the most significant lesson we can learn is that communication is often culture specific. Granted, the principles of communication mentioned thus far apply to all

cultures. Individuals from all cultures learn to communicate. They cannot not communicate. Their communication and their lives are in process. And once they communicate a message, intentionally or unintentionally, the effect is irreversibly felt by others.

*Every culture views
beauty in different ways.
You expand your world
each time you see beauty
through the eyes of others.*
—BARBARA DOSKER

But we must not make the mistake of thinking that what we value in terms of communication competencies is desired by all people in every culture. This is not always the case. For example, in this book, you will be encouraged to maintain direct eye contact with your listeners, use expressive gestures, employ vocal variety, and share personal illustrations in your speaking. For the purposes of addressing most American audiences, these and other skills will serve a positive and desirable function.

But if you were addressing a group of Japanese businesspeople in Tokyo, these same behaviors might be interpreted as overly forward, disrespectful, annoying, and even rude. The Japanese often view direct eye contact as an invasion of personal space. The use of exaggerated gestures and vocal variety does not fit their more restrained and formal style of communication. And personal disclosure would be inappropriate, if not suspect, in a large group of strangers.

"Well," you sigh, "I just won't ever give a speech to a group of Japanese businesspeople in Tokyo!" Maybe not, but the United States is a country that is home to hundreds of different cultures. That's the beauty of our nation! If you really analyzed any audience in America, you'd be surprised at the heterogeneous mix of the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of your listeners.

The purpose of this public speaking book is not to provide you with a list of the communication skills and behaviors valued by each of these different cultures. We'll leave that book to someone else. But you are encouraged to become aware of, sensitive to, and respectful of these differences. This is not to say you must shift your communication style with each audience you address. That would be an impossible task. But you are being challenged to examine the notion that "your way is the only way."

You need to become more aware of the subtle, and not so subtle, differences between cultures. Not only must you raise your level of awareness concerning these differences, but you also need to be more sensitive to them, not only in your speaking but also in your daily interactions with others. And finally, you must respect these differences in your speaking and listening with all people. The next section will help you meet this challenge.

1.4 Attitude Is More Important than Aptitude

Before proceeding to the next chapter, it is important to mention the attitude of the communicator, for the attitude of the speaker is the most important factor in effective communication.

A person's attitude is far more important than his aptitude in communicating with others. An individual can be highly trained and skilled in the communication arts but may possess an angry or critical attitude. It is this negative attitude that is

sensed below the level of spoken language, and the receiver or audience ultimately will respond to it rather than to the words.

The attitudes that distinguish truly effective communicators from less effective ones are worth mentioning here. Effective communicators seem to possess an attitude of self-acceptance. They accept who they are without having to prove a great deal to others. They exhibit an attitude of other-centeredness, which enables them to empathize with, care for, and respond to others. Rather than constantly being consumed with the need or desire to control others or gain their approval, these self-accepting individuals can dance to the beat of a different drummer with greater ease and grace. They don't spend a lot of time looking over their shoulders or down their noses.

Flexibility is another attitude that characterizes these individuals, for they are more likely to experiment with new behaviors, take risks, and make mistakes. They appear gentle in their dealings with others. And finally, these individuals possess a sense of openness and authenticity that makes them comfortable to be around, demanding little energy. We walk away from these individuals feeling enlarged rather than diminished.

The most telling attitude of effective communicators is their sense of joy—not just a temporary happiness or a practiced, interpersonal warmth, but a joyfulness that seems to come from deep within. Usually these individuals have lived a while, they have managed to survive and accept some of life's tragedies, and still, they have chosen to embrace the beauty and mystery of life.

You know when you've been in their presence, for they usually make you feel calm, relaxed, and trusting. Just as certain animals can sense fear in some people and love in others, you can feel the attitude of joyfulness in these individuals. At such times, words really don't matter all that much.

Without these positive attitudes shaping and influencing the communication process, most communication skills training is wasted. Ultimately, the heart is more important than the head.

1.5 Communication Skills for Your Life

Before we actually begin learning about the concepts and skills of effective public speaking, let's spend a few moments examining your personal communication life, because how you communicate interpersonally lays the foundation for your attitude and skills in public speaking. Effective public speaking must be audience centered.

There have been individuals who were powerful, persuasive public speakers. They could command the attention of hundreds of people with their words alone. Their relationship with the audience was impressive, as the masses swayed in unison to their every word.

But their relationship with the audience wasn't necessarily indicative of their relationships with individuals in their personal lives. Some of these outstanding public speakers had miserable personal lives, wracked with pain, emptiness, and longing. Their great speaking skills could impress hundreds in the audience but could do very little to bridge the gulf between themselves and those who should have mattered—family and friends.

In this book, you will learn skills and concepts that will help you speak effectively to an audience. But before you run out and book speaking engagements, we need to begin with a brief discussion on a topic that is enormously important to your life—your interpersonal communication impact on others.

Every time you talk with someone, you either enlarge or diminish that person by your interaction. Suppose that you and another person are engaged in casual conversation for a few minutes and then you say good-bye. As you walk away from that individual, how are you feeling? What kind of emotional impact did he have on you? Maybe he had a diminishing impact, and you say to yourself, “Yuk! I’m glad to be away from that negative, depressing guy. I was feeling all right before I talked with him.” Perhaps he didn’t have any noticeable effect on you, and you’re saying, “I wonder where I parked that darn car of mine.” Or just maybe, his impact on you was enlarging, and you’re exclaiming, “I felt pretty down before I talked with him, and now I feel better. The world doesn’t look as depressing as it did just a few minutes ago.”

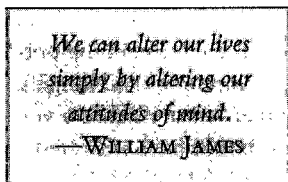
Do others enlarge or diminish you? Don’t count the neutral impact as a third category, because neutral impact is similar to a negative impact. So clump those two together into the “diminish” category. If you still want three categories, that’s okay. The discussion will work either way.

Remember that communication is a process, and your past history, your state of mind, your physical condition, and a host of other factors come into play here. And yet ultimately, you have an impact on others every time you interact. You either enlarge or diminish another person by your interactions. With every word, sound, gesture, expression, glance, movement, pause, and touch you share with another person, he or she is changed in ways that are both subtle and striking.

There are six specific ways you can enlarge others by your interpersonal communication with them: not taking communication so personally, listening without verbal interruption, listening reflectively, complimenting others, reframing, and touching.

Not Taking Communication So Personally

Most of us listen to what others say in terms of how it affects us personally. We ask questions such as: “Is that right or wrong (from *my* point of view)?” “How does that affect *me*?” “What does the speaker think or feel about *me*?” “How do *I* feel about what was shared?” “How do *I* respond?” With all of these questions, did you notice where the focus of attention was? It was on our response, our evaluation, our point of view—in short, we take center stage; everything revolves around us. We take it all so personally.



That’s not necessarily a bad thing. We need to evaluate the merits of a sales presentation, we need to form an opinion of our new manager, and we need to check our emotional response in a conflict situation. But to overemphasize a self-centered approach to all communication is not healthy. We need to develop the ability to suspend judgment when listening to another person. We need to

develop the art of psychological and emotional disengagement—to take our ego out of gear once in a while. When we always take what is said personally, we get hooked into many unnecessary arguments, conflicts, and struggles.

An effective technique that can help you to disengage your ego, and not take everything that is said so personally, is to ask these questions when you're listening to someone else:

“What is this person's point of view?”

“What does this say about this person?”

“How is this person feeling?”

“Where is this person coming from?”

“How does this person see the situation?”

“Who is this person?”

Did you notice the different focus of attention? No longer do we take center stage. The speaker is the focus of attention—her point of view, her feelings, her frame of reference, her character and personality. We're not taking in all that is said in terms of how it affects us. We are broadening our perspective to include the one who is talking. We have concentrated on the speaker, and, consequently, we have also distanced ourselves from her. We are not taking her communication so personally.

The ability to not take communication personally is the first step in communication—to be able to hear what the other person is saying without a screen of self-centered questions filtering and clouding what is being said. Without this ability, communication with others will be superficial and often defensive. Without this ability, we will be hearing only the echoes of our own mind, instead of the thoughts and feelings of the other person.

Listening without Verbal Interruption

Now that we can accept what is being said from an other-centered point of view, we can begin to listen without verbal interruption—the ability to be silent for a period of time when someone else is speaking.

Did you know that when we are talking with another person, we verbally interrupt the other person every 12 seconds? Every 12 seconds! “That's wonderful!” “That's terrible!” “I'm sure!” “I'm all . . .” “That reminds me of a time when I . . .” “If I were you, I would . . .” “No, that's not true, because . . .” “Well, it was even worse for me, because I . . .” And the interruptions go on and on. Every 12 seconds. Back and forth. On and on we interrupt.

And we wonder why we don't feel like we've been really listened to, really taken seriously, really understood at a deep level. Because of the constant interruptions and judgments, advice and direction, we realize there is no safe harbor to simply say what's on our minds and in our hearts without being interrupted from all sides every 12 seconds. Maybe that explains why we pay certain people \$100 to \$150 an hour to just sit quietly and listen to us in therapy.

One of the most enlarging behaviors we can share with another person is to listen without verbal evaluation—without interrupting every 12 seconds! What an oasis that would be. Perhaps the most loving thing we can do for another human being is to listen quietly, deeply, without interruption.

The next time your spouse, your child, or a neighbor begins talking with you, ask yourself the question, "Should I give this person 12 seconds before I interrupt, or should I allow 120 seconds?" If you wear a watch with a sweep second hand, time yourself if you can do it without being too obvious. See what happens if you remain silent for two entire minutes! Many times the other person won't even notice your silence and will continue talking. Other times, he or she might ask, "Is something wrong?" "Are you all right?" Such questions could be indicators that the other person is accustomed to your interruptions. Don't feel bad. Just respond by saying, "Everything is fine. I just think what you're saying is important, and I didn't want to interrupt you."

Listening Reflectively

In addition to not taking communication too personally and listening without verbal interruption, another enlarging communication behavior is to listen reflectively.

To listen *reflectively* means to mirror back to the speaker what he is saying.

*It is better to ask some
of the questions than to
know all the answers.*

—JAMES THURBER

When you are listening to someone, think in terms of, "What is this person trying to communicate to me?" "What is this person saying?" "What is this person feeling?" As you begin to get a sense of exactly what this person is attempting to communicate to you, check it

out—reflect or mirror back to the speaker. The simplest way to accomplish this is to begin your questions with

"Are you saying . . . ?"

"I hear you saying . . . ?"

"You think . . . ?"

"You believe . . . ?"

"Are you feeling . . . ?"

"Your point is . . . ?"

"Do you mean . . . ?"

These are simple beginnings to your questions, but they will change the entire focus of your communication. Once again, where is the attention directed? You? Or the other person? Right, the other person!

There may be a change in the relationship with this person if you use reflective listening with any frequency. With practice, this reflective way of listening will begin to feel natural, and you will notice that your communication patterns shift from a self-centered posture to a more other-centered focus.

There are numerous advantages of this reflective listening technique. First, it shifts the focus from you to the speaker, and it encourages you to not take communication too personally. Ideally, it will also force you to listen without verbal judgment. Second, reflective listening will prove to the speaker that you care about what he is saying. This, in and of itself, is enlarging. Third, it improves the accuracy of communication. If your reflected statement is inaccurate, the speaker can clarify, explain, or illustrate in detail. Fourth, this type of listening takes the burden off you. No longer do you have to judge, give advice, or solve problems. You are simply acting as a mirror, reflecting the other person's image back to him. Fifth, you provide the speaker with a

safe harbor where he can talk and be heard. It beats paying \$100 to \$150 an hour just to be heard accurately. In Chapter 7, we will examine specific ways you can listen to a speaker more effectively.

Complimenting Others

Mark Twain once admitted, "I can live two months on one compliment." A sincere compliment not only feels good, but it also can give new life to the person receiving it. We all know the feeling of satisfaction, joy, and even inspiration when a sincere compliment comes our way. We love to receive them, yet we are usually guilty of not giving them as often as we could.

The fourth communication skill for your life is that of complimenting others—sharing sincere praise. The first step in developing this skill is to decide to be a source of compliments. Begin to look for the best in others. Sure, all individuals have their weaknesses, faults, and areas for improvement. But shift your focus of attention and instead see their strengths of character, achievement, and effort.

Compliment Character. The first type of compliment is to acknowledge the internal attractiveness of the person rather than look at his or her physical appearance. Complimenting character traits is better than complimenting physical traits because character traits do not diminish with age. Such things as kindness, generosity, optimism, gentleness, humor, trustworthiness, empathy, loyalty, and candor are just a few of the hundreds of character or personality traits you can appreciate and praise. Here are a few character compliments:

"I really appreciate your thoughtfulness."

"Your trustworthiness makes me feel secure."

"I like your sense of humor."

Compliment Achievement. A second form of complimenting is to compliment achievement. To do this, you simply acknowledge something that a person has accomplished or realized. The achievement can be as modest as remembering a telephone number or as monumental as overcoming some physical disability. Here are some examples of complimenting achievement:

"Your speech was inspirational."

"Congratulations on finishing your decorating project!"

"I'm happy you were elected to the city board."

"Great job!"

Compliment Effort. You can compliment a person on his or her effort to achieve some task or goal, even if the person was unsuccessful in attaining it. In U.S. culture, we tend to compliment only the winners—those people who finish first and win the trophies. But you can compliment people for the effort they invest in a task or project. What's important is that they tried. It's not the destination but the journey that matters. Here are some examples of complimenting effort:

"I'm really impressed with the effort you put into this project."

"I love your determination!"

"You ran a clean and honest race during this election."

Compliment the Invisible. The final form of complimenting is a bit unusual. It involves complimenting people on the things they don't do—complimenting the invisible. There are countless things people don't do that are worthy of appreciation, yet we rarely think about those things. Maybe the person doesn't swear, chain-smoke, or interrupt constantly, so tell him or her that you appreciate it.

Once you begin to compliment the invisible, it can be fun and even entertaining. Here are some examples of complimenting the invisible:

"I appreciate the fact that you don't swear."

"I'm thankful you don't mention the mistakes of the past."

"You could have criticized me, but you didn't. Thanks!"

"I'm happy you don't watch television all night long."

Your willingness to see the best in others and verbally compliment their positive traits, efforts, and achievements is a life skill that will be a blessing not only to others but also a blessing to you.

Reframing What Is Said

A fifth way you can enlarge a person is to reframe his negative perception of a situation, circumstance, or person. The *reframing* technique involves seeing something from a different perspective or point of view. The French Renaissance writer Montaigne once cautioned, "We are hurt not so much by what happens, as by our opinion of what happens." In other words, our perceptions of an event are more important than the event itself.

How we choose to see something is instrumental in determining how we will respond to, deal with, and resolve problems that confront us. For instance, a man is fired from his job. Nothing can change the fact that he has been fired. But he can view the event from a variety of perspectives. The obvious viewpoint is that the firing is a terrible thing. He is out of a job, and he will need to begin looking for another one. It's a depressing situation. Many people in the man's shoes would stop here, go no further in their attempt to see this event from a different point of view, and would simply become hurt, angry, or depressed. Many people do not realize that there can be other ways of perceiving this same event.

It can be seen as a new beginning. He can finally pursue employment that might be more to his liking. It can be seen as a learning experience. What went wrong? How can he improve? What skills does he need to develop for future jobs? It can be viewed as a chance to take a break from the rat race. If he can afford it, he can use the next few weeks or months to rest and possibly take a vacation from the responsibilities of earning a living. It can be seen as a time to travel. He can sell everything he owns and hit the road. It can be viewed as an opportunity to be creative and start his own little company or business. This one event can be seen in a hundred different ways—no one way more valid than another.

Despite the many points of view from which we can choose to see a situation, we tend to hold onto the first interpretation that pops into our heads. We cement that perspective into our field of vision and limit our emotional responses to that point of view. In short, we get stuck. One experienced marriage and family therapist stated,

"As a counselor, I don't change my clients' situation; I simply help them see other ways of viewing the same situation." This seems to have a freeing effect on clients. It releases them from the bondage of seeing something from only one point of view. Depression can also be viewed as an invitation to grow. Anger can also be seen as a way of dealing with repressed sadness. The death of a loved one can also be a reminder to love those around us with greater appreciation. There are many ways of seeing. We need to be flexible in our perceptions and interpretations of those events that make up the fabric of our lives.

*One question, one gentle
word can change the
course of a conversation
and a life.*

—ALFRED ADLER

As a friend, you can enlarge others by opening their eyes to other ways of viewing a situation. If they share something "terrible" that has just happened to them, you can listen without verbal interruption, reflect what they are saying and feeling, and, if you can, reframe their situation. You can do this by simply stating:

"John, another way of looking at this is . . ."

"Mary, could this also mean . . ."

"Dad, another interpretation of this is . . ."

Your reframing doesn't have to be accepted by others as the truth, as insightful, or even as a solution to a problem. It's simply a way of allowing them to not get stuck with their own frame of reference. The purpose is to get them unstuck, to help them see with a different set of glasses, to assist them in looking at the same situation from a different perspective. You can be instrumental in freeing them from the prison of their own perceptions.

Touching Others

The final way to enlarge others is to touch them. This sounds like an obvious suggestion, but it is often overlooked as a means of making others feel acknowledged, cared for, and loved. There are times when words ring hollow and we need the comfort and reassurance that only physical contact can provide.

A little boy was frightened by a summer thunderstorm and ran to his father for comfort. The father attempted to reassure the boy by saying that the lightning and thunder were actually far away. "Anyway," added the dad, "God will always be with you for protection even though you can't see him." The boy listened to his father but continued to crawl up onto his lap. "I know that," the boy said, "but can I hug you anyway? I need something with skin on it."

At the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, orphaned children under the age of six months were dying for some unknown reason. The mortality rate for these infants in the orphanages of Europe was 100 percent. Experts tried to help by giving the infants more food, better lighting, special medicines, and even soothing music. But nothing seemed to work. The babies kept dying. This was so prevalent in Europe that it was referred to as the "Marasmus Syndrome." *Marasmus* in Latin means "to waste away." And that's what the babies continued to do—waste away. Apparently, these infants did not possess the will to begin life. Then the orphanages discovered that

if these young infants were touched on a regular basis by “hired mothers”—women who were paid to handle, cuddle, and fondle the babies—they would live. The death rate dropped to the point at which an infant’s death was the exception.

Could it be that we suffer from an adult form of the Marasmus Syndrome? Perhaps in our culture, we are wasting away from lack of touch. How many hugs do you receive a day? When was the last time you really hugged another human being for more than one or two seconds? One of the most powerful ways to enlarge another person is to touch them. Touching changes relationships. It changes lives.

There are entire books devoted to the importance of touching behavior, but for our purposes, remember that there are times when words don’t bridge the gap between you and another person. When to touch? How long to touch? How to touch? These are questions only you can answer depending on the individual, the situation, and your intent. But keep in mind that touching others is one of the most powerful ways that we enlarge others, and ourselves.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Enlarging communication behaviors

On a sheet of paper, identify three individuals whose communication behaviors have had an enlarging impact on your life. List specific behaviors that each person has demonstrated. If possible, thank each of the three individuals for their positive contributions to your life.

2. Communicating in other cultures

Ask an individual from a different cultural background about his or her communication behaviors and attitudes. How do his or her 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?

3. Seeing your communication improvements

On a sheet of paper, list three specific ways you have improved your communication behavior in the past five years. Maybe you’re a better listener, less judgmental, more assertive, more forgiving, less timid, and so on. How do you feel about each positive change? How has each improvement changed your life?

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. Analyzing a communication event

Consider a recent communication event from your life—asking a friend for a favor, trying to persuade your employer that you were deserving of a raise, or resolving a relationship conflict. Identify the seven communication components of sender, message, environment, channel, receiver, feedback, and noise, and explain how they contributed to the success or failure of the communication event. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts and feelings about this assignment in class.

2. Listening to others

Use reflective listening when you are talking with a friend. After your friend has completed a statement, try reflecting it back to him or her (“Are you saying . . . ?” or “Do you mean to tell me that . . . ?”). How did it feel? How did your friend respond to your mirroring? Be prepared to discuss your reactions to this assignment in class.

3. Reframing others

Pair up with another student in class and share a recent disappointment or upsetting event. Listen to your partner describe his disappointment or upsetting event for 30–60 seconds; then offer one or two *positive* reframes of that situation. “Well, Jill, another way of looking at this is . . .” or “Fred, a positive way of seeing this is . . .” Discuss your responses to the activity; then reverse roles and repeat the exercise.

GIVING YOURSELF PERMISSION WELCOMING A NEW YOU

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 2.1** Explain how you feel about public speaking
- 2.2** Explain the speaker apprehension self-appraisal scale
- 2.3** Discuss your speaker apprehension self-appraisal ranking
- 2.4** Apply the concept of giving yourself permission to make mistakes
- 2.5** Describe your response to the permission list for speakers
- 2.6** Explain the concept of giving yourself permission to overcome your fear of speaking
- 2.7** Explain the concept of why are you so nervous?
- 2.8** Summarize three reasons why public speaking is different from conversation
- 2.9** List five encouraging words about stage fright
- 2.10** Explain the question “will I ever get rid of these butterflies?”
- 2.11** Discuss the concept of adventure and growth, not safety
- 2.12** Identify seven ways to be successful in a hybrid public speaking class

Kuan knocked on his professor's door and heard her say, “Come on in, the water's fine!” Even though the purpose of his visit was to drop her Public Speaking class, he still smiled at her sense of humor.

“Well, what brings you to me, Kuan?” his professor said cheerfully.

“I just wanted to tell you that I've enjoyed your class these past two weeks, but I need to drop the course.”

“Why?” she asked.

“I have a 4.0 grade point average in college, and I know I won't get an A in your class,” he said reluctantly. “So I'm thinking about transferring to a college that doesn't require Public Speaking for graduation.”

"All that effort just to keep a 4.0?"

"Well, I've always been a straight A student, and the public speaking class is a real problem if I can't get an A."

"Maybe your real problem is not public speaking," she offered. "Maybe your real problem is your desire to be perfect."

"I don't want to be perfect," he said. "I just want to get straight As."

"A wise man once said that 'He who is attached to much, will suffer much.' You might consider being less attached to your desire to be perfect. You might think about letting go of perfection and consider being an 'excellent student' or maybe even just a 'good student.' In fact, you might need to be gentler on yourself in other areas of your life as well."

"I've never thought of it that way," Kuan whispered almost to himself.

"This Public Speaking class could provide you with your greatest learning, Kuan—to give yourself permission to make mistakes, because it's through our mistakes that we learn and grow."

After a long silence, Kuan announced, "I'll stay in your class."

"Hey, that's great! And when you give your first speech, make a mistake or two so I feel needed as a teacher."

"Now that's a promise," Kuan chuckled as he rose and shook his professor's hand.

2.1 How do You Feel about Public Speaking?

Before we begin discussing the idea of giving yourself permission to make mistakes, let's take a moment and imagine what the process of giving a speech might be like. It might be helpful to take an imaginary glimpse into the future before we actually begin—somewhat like looking at a map before setting out on the actual journey itself. Let's take a few moments and glance at a map of the places you will be exploring as you learn to speak to an audience.

We will begin our exploration by responding to the Speaker Apprehension Self-Appraisal Scale.

2.2 Speaker Apprehension Self-Appraisal Scale

Read each of the following 10 speaking situations and circle your response on the 5-point scale. Upon completion of your 10 responses, add up your total points circled and refer to the Speaker Apprehension Scale provided.

1. Having a friendly conversation with a close friend, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified

2. Having a conversation with a stranger, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified

3. Research and outlining a formal speech, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified

4. Practicing a formal speech, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
5. Sitting alone in the speaking room 30 minutes before I speak, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
6. Sitting in front of the audience one minute before I speak, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
7. Speaking to an audience of 30 strangers, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
8. Speaking to an audience of 30 friends, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
9. Speaking to an audience of 30 communication instructors, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified
10. Speaking to an audience of 30 infants in their cribs, I would feel

1	2	3	4	5
Confident	Relaxed	Neutral	Anxious	Terrified

2.3 Speaker Apprehension Self-Appraisal Ranking

Although this scale is simply a rating of how you *might* respond to different speaking situations, it can provide you with some things to ponder as we begin looking at public speaking and your attitude toward your audience and toward yourself.

There are no right answers, and your responses would most likely fluctuate depending on a host of variables, including your psychological frame of mind, your emotional state, the specific people in the audience, your speech topic, what you had for breakfast, and so forth. But these 10 situations give you a more specific idea as to your level of apprehension.

Add up your total scores and let's see how you did.

Score of 10–20. Comfort with Speaking.

Your level of confidence and comfort in speaking would provide you with a healthy emotional foundation to address an audience without anxiety.

Score of 20–40. Acceptable Tolerance to Speaking.

Your level of speaker anxiety is normal and would provide you with a satisfactory foundation to address an audience with proper preparation and practice.

Score of 40–50. It's Good You're Reading This Chapter.

Your level of anxiety is high, but there's good news. Your level of self-satisfaction after reading this chapter could be much greater than the level of self-satisfaction of those who didn't respond with as much anxiety. In fact, some of the most satisfied speakers, after completing a public speaking course, are those individuals who initially reported the greatest anxiety before receiving instruction and practicing their speaking skills.

Regardless of your score on the Speaker Apprehension Scale, you'll be pleased to realize that you can decrease your level of speaking anxiety by changing the thoughts you have about speaking in front of others. Let's begin by taking a look at some interesting aspects of the situations you just responded to.

How did you feel about your level of apprehension when you envisioned having a conversation with a stranger or a friend? Normally, your anxiety is much lower when talking one-on-one with another person, regardless of the degree of familiarity, when compared to addressing an audience. How did you feel?

How were your feelings when you imagined you were researching or practicing your speech by yourself? Once again, your level of anxiety is relatively low when compared to actually standing in front of your audience and speaking.

It's not surprising that speakers usually report increased feelings of apprehension when they envision themselves in the speaking room 30 minutes before their talk and especially when they're getting ready to be introduced to the audience. How did you feel?

And finally, how did you feel when you imagined yourself delivering your speech? Did the kind of audience make a difference? Audience membership can make a big difference. Speaking to friends probably didn't make you feel as apprehensive as speaking to a group of strangers and especially not as anxious when addressing a group of communication instructors.

However, the final speaking situation is interesting. How did you feel about speaking to an audience of 30 infants in their cribs? Probably not apprehensive at all. Why? Although you were in the presence of 30 human beings while you spoke, most likely you didn't feel anxious at all. You might have even felt comfortable or even confident. Why?

The answer is that the infants weren't going to evaluate or judge you. They're just babies facing you with those innocent eyes and wonderful smiles. The other audience groups were knowledgeable and experienced enough to evaluate your speaking effectiveness, especially the communication instructors. But not the babies in their cribs. Interesting. Think about that for a moment. Your fear of speaking is primarily based upon your fear of evaluation, and ultimately rejection. All performance anxiety is founded upon the fear that we will be judged to be inadequate, undesirable, and, in the end, unlovable.

But that doesn't have to be your frame of reference when it comes to public speaking. You can change your ideas and expectations about what it means to share your thoughts and feelings in front of others. It all begins with giving yourself permission to not be perfect.

2.4 Giving Yourself Permission to Make Mistakes

Someone once said, "If you're not failing every once in a while, you're living life too cautiously." One of the primary stumbling blocks to our personal growth is our fear of making a mistake: making the wrong decision, choosing the wrong profession, marrying the wrong person, looking foolish in the eyes of others. We are often paralyzed into not acting at all and not taking any step because we fear it might be the wrong one.

But aren't mistakes an important part of the learning process? Isn't that how we truly learn? Not from reading it in a book or listening to someone else, but by experiencing it ourselves. The first time we tried to walk as infants was probably awkward, if not humorous. And our initial attempt at riding a bicycle without mom or dad holding on to the seat must have been a sight. Remember, we learn from our mistakes. That's the beauty of this journey.

R. H. Macy, founder of Macy's Department Stores, tried seven times to get his department stores started but failed each time. Can you imagine his sense of failure even after the first or second attempt? But on the eighth venture out, he succeeded. Just think of all the Macy's stores you've visited over the years. Would you have had the courage, as Mr. Macy did, to risk even a second attempt, let alone an eighth? The saddest thing is not that we didn't succeed, but rather that we didn't even try. We learn from our mistakes.

As you read this book, you will be asked to try new behaviors and new ways of seeing yourself. Don't take yourself too seriously on this journey. Give yourself permission to make mistakes along the way. Give yourself permission to be gentle on yourself.

2.5 A Permission List for Speakers

Before we begin talking about the mechanics of speaking in front of others, we need to take a few moments to examine your attitudes toward public speaking. People will often train as public speakers without ever once asking themselves if this is a skill they would like to improve. They struggle through all of the preparation and practice required for effective public speaking, and yet they neglect to explore some very fundamental issues involved in this highly charged communication event. They never give themselves permission to improve their speaking skills.

Be gentle on yourself.
—JOY BROWNE

This may sound strange to you—giving yourself permission to improve your speaking skills. Usually, public speaking training is imposed on you by someone else. For example, it may be required by your college or university for graduation, or your manager at work may think you would benefit from such a course. Rarely do you, after an afternoon of introspection, decide suddenly that your speaking skills are lacking and your life would be dramatically improved if you learned to speak more effectively on your feet.

So let's take a few moments to explore this whole area of giving yourself permission to speak. Read the following statements and circle the response that most accurately describes your feelings.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. I give myself permission to express myself. | yes/no/unsure |
| 2. I give myself permission to stand up in front of others. | yes/no/unsure |
| 3. I give myself permission to ask others to listen to me. | yes/no/unsure |
| 4. I give myself permission to experience something new. | yes/no/unsure |
| 5. I give myself permission to feel uncomfortable. | yes/no/unsure |
| 6. I give myself permission to speak in front of others. | yes/no/unsure |
| 7. I give myself permission to not be perfect. | yes/no/unsure |
| 8. I give myself permission to make mistakes. | yes/no/unsure |

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 9. I give myself permission to try new speaking skills. | yes/no/unsure |
| 10. I give myself permission to improve my speaking. | yes/no/unsure |
| 11. I give myself permission to not know all the answers. | yes/no/unsure |
| 12. I give myself permission to teach others. | yes/no/unsure |
| 13. I give myself permission to persuade others. | yes/no/unsure |
| 14. I give myself permission to let others have their opinions. | yes/no/unsure |
| 15. I give myself permission not to seek the approval of others. | yes/no/unsure |
| 16. I give myself permission to enjoy my time speaking in public. | yes/no/unsure |
| 17. I give myself permission to like my voice and my body. | yes/no/unsure |
| 18. I give myself permission to be gentle on myself. | yes/no/unsure |
| 19. I give myself permission to be myself. | yes/no/unsure |
| 20. I give myself permission to love myself. | yes/no/unsure |

Did it feel unusual or unnatural "giving yourself permission" to do or feel these things? Usually, permission to think, feel, or do something comes from someone or something outside of yourself. It comes from the government, the boss, the teacher, the church, the school, your parents, your friends, or your spouse.

However, in the 20 permission statements you just considered, the permission was coming from *you*, not someone else. It didn't matter whether you responded with "yes," "no," or "unsure" because it was you who was doing the deciding. No one else. You were the one who was giving permission or not giving permission. You were even the person deciding if you were "unsure" about each statement. No matter how you responded, each of the 20 times, you were in the control tower deciding how each decision landed.

This concept of where permission resides is often called the *locus of power*. Do you decide things for yourself, or do others decide for you? It's the subtle difference between "I have to ..." and "I choose to..." Try this: in a normal speaking voice, say, "I *have* to give a speech." Say it again. How did that feel? Now try saying, "I *choose* to give a speech." Again. How did that feel? Did you notice a difference between the two statements?

With the "I have to" statement, you may have noticed less commitment in your voice, perhaps even less energy. When you said, "I choose to give a speech," you may have felt more definite, more determined. If not, try the "choose" statement again. Feel anything different? If you think that feels awkward or strange, try saying "I choose not to give a speech" a couple of times and explore how that statement feels to you.

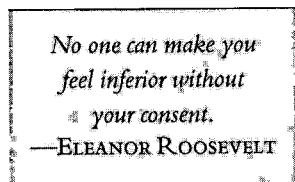
You might be thinking they're just words—"I have to ...," "I choose to ...," and "I choose not to..." But words are powerful, and these particular words—"have to" and "choose to"—bring you to an interesting place in your personal decision making. Who makes your decisions? Are they made for you most of the time (I have to ...)? Or do you choose and decide for yourself (I choose to ...; I choose not to ...)?

Much of your sense of independence, personal strength, and internal resilience depend directly on your decision to think and decide for yourself during your lifetime.

As you marked your responses to the 20 permission list items above, you may have been surprised by the number of statements you have never consciously considered before this moment. These are not questions we often ask ourselves. And it would not be unusual if you responded more frequently with "no" and "unsure" than

“yes” because most individuals often feel they have nothing really important to share that would warrant the attention of a group of human beings. Many people, after completing this questionnaire, report that they rarely feel anyone would want to listen to them speak.

If your answer to these items was “yes” the majority of the time, you are the exception to the rule, and your training in public speaking should be easy, if not downright enjoyable. If, however, you were unsure, responding with lots of nos, or you thought this was a dumb set of questions, don’t be discouraged. Your training in public speaking might just change your perception of who you think you are.



Before you begin your training in public speaking, we need to spend a few moments examining one of our most common fears—the fear of giving a speech in front of a group of people. The 20 statements on the permission list asked if you gave yourself permission to overcome your fear of speaking. No matter how you responded to these questions, you will benefit from a brief discussion of overcoming stage fright.

2.6 Giving Yourself Permission to Overcome Your Fear of Speaking

The thought of speaking before an audience can often arouse a great amount of anxiety. It outranks death, losing one’s spouse, financial bankruptcy, illness, war, and snakes as the number one thing that terrifies us most.

Most people would probably agree with this survey. Very few people actively seek speaking opportunities, sneak into speech tournament competitions, or grab the microphone from the speaker at a PTA meeting and deliver an impromptu talk. Very few.

Many of us would prefer avoiding anything even resembling a public speaking event. Whenever someone is needed to introduce the bride and groom, deliver a brief sales presentation, speak at a luncheon, preside at the annual awards dinner, or even say a prayer at the family reunion, most folks disappear into the woodwork or run for the hills. The stress of speaking before an audience is great for many of us.

Three Ways We Stress Out When Speaking

There are three primary categories of stress responses that people report when they experience stage fright. *Physical sensations* make up the first category of stress responses that can occur when we are preparing to speak. The physical sensations can begin long before the actual day of the speech and may appear in the form of sleepless nights, an upset stomach, dizziness, and tingling in the hands and legs. During the speech itself, the physical sensations can include trembling knees, sweaty palms, lightheadedness, dry mouth, and nervous coughing. The exact physical sensations vary from person to person, of course, but almost everyone experiences some degree of physical discomfort or uneasiness when speaking in front of others.

The second category of stress responses includes *emotional responses* that can be experienced before, during, and after the speaking performance. They can include

feelings of being overwhelmed, fear, loss of control, depression, panic, anxiety, helplessness, inadequacy, abandonment, shame, and anger.

The final category is the *psychological responses* that can be experienced when delivering the speech. This includes loss of memory, negative self-talk, jumbled thought patterns, nervous repetition of words or phrases, and the use of verbal pauses such as "ah," "um," and "you know."

To complicate matters, these three categories of stress responses can and often do interact with one another, increasing your level of stage fright. For instance, the physical sensations of trembling knees can give rise to feelings of being out of control and feeling helpless or terrified. These feelings in turn can cause a psychological block so that the words of your talk are lost.

Sound like fun? Well, before you throw this book in the garbage and swear that you would rather hide away in some cave in Tibet than risk these terrible ills, hold on. It's not all that bad.

Even skilled speakers experience some of these responses when addressing an audience. But the difference between you and them is that they understand the speaking process. They understand that such responses are natural. It's all part of being human. They realize that these responses can be changed. These speakers have prepared and practiced their speeches, and when they do experience any of these sensations of stage fright, they know how to bring themselves back under control. They know the skills and techniques to get themselves to breathe gently, center their focus of attention, and return to their talk. This chapter is designed to enable you to do the same. But first, let's look at why you are so nervous.

2.7 Why Are You So Nervous?

Before you can overcome a problem, you must admit that there is a problem and then understand the reasons for its existence. Most people, when confronted with a fear or anxiety, either deny its existence or fail to adequately investigate the reasons for it.

As to the first issue of denial, very few novice speakers are grandiose enough to boast that they have no fears regarding public speaking. Without exception, most beginning speakers are very conscious and aware of their fears, but they don't seem to know why they are afraid.

One mystified speaker angrily lamented, "Why am I so frightened? I know how to talk."

"My friends all tell me I am witty," another complained, "but when I get up to speak in front of a group, I just go blank."

And one executive grumbled, "I've had this speech written out for nearly a month, but as soon as I stand up before my audience, my eyes get blurry and my brain turns to mush. I just don't understand why."

Why, they ask.

Why is it so difficult to just speak in front of a small group of 10 or 12 people, many of whom you may know? Why is it so hard to deliver a talk when you've been talking all your life? Why is it so demanding to speak, even when you're prepared ahead of time? Why should you be so nervous?

Only One of Me and Lots of Them

Let's look at the same public speaking scene, without the sound. There is a group of people seated in a room, all facing one direction. Then, one of them stands, walks to the front of the room, turns, and faces the other people, who are still seated. As she stands above the seated audience, the speaker's mouth begins to move, and her hands gesture occasionally. All eyes are on her. She looks at the group. Her mouth is moving. Their mouths are shut. She gestures. They do not. Her mouth stops moving. The seated individuals clap their hands. She turns and walks down from the podium, finds her chair, and sits down. Now, everyone in the group is seated again.

What just happened? Well, if you simply watched the event and did not analyze the content of the speech, you would discover a very striking thing. The speaker becomes separate from the people she is talking to. She is no longer just one of them. Instead, she is in front of them. She is standing above them, while they are seated below. She is talking, while they are silent. She is moving and animated, while they sit motionless. She is glancing at individual members, while every eye in the audi-

*If you're never scared
or embarrassed or hurt,
it means you never
take any chances.*
—JULIA SOREL

ence is on her. In fact, she now controls the event, while they have little or no control. She determines the ebb and flow of the experience, while they watch for her cues. When she finishes, they applaud. She walks back down to find her chair, while they are seated and are still clapping. In short, the speaker becomes the leader of the group, and the people in the audience become her followers.

Now, if you are the president of the United States or the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, such an experience in front of all those people would not be frightening (maybe). Having all of those eyes riveted on you, watching your every move, listening to your every word—you, the center of attention—might not be too frightening, if you're trained for such experiences.

2.8 Public Speaking Is Different from Conversation

The fact that you've carried on conversations all your life doesn't help now. The fact that you are witty doesn't help now. The fact that you've written the speech beforehand doesn't help now. All of these things don't help now because you're not involved in conversational skills.

You are involved in presentational skills. You are, in short, presenting yourself, both body and mind, to a group of people who are watching your presentation. You are no longer one of them. You are separate from them. You are presenting; they are observing. That's why it's so frightening to speak in front of an audience. No one has ever told you what to do in this situation. Sure, you've spent your entire lifetime learning how to carry on a conversation, how to informally talk to others in small group settings or at intimate gatherings at quaint restaurants. But it is unlikely that you've ever been trained to present yourself to a group of people. So remember to give yourself permission to be gentle on yourself as you learn to be different from "the rest of them"—your audience.

Public speaking is an activity that involves mental and physical presentation skills that are different from social conversational skills. Being an effective public speaker requires physical coordination, mental concentration, content organization, skills practice, and a great deal of experience. Just as it would be foolish to thrust a beginning surfer into large waves her first time out, it would be equally foolish to expect the beginning speaker to be cool, calm, and collected the first time before an audience. Formal presentation skills require as much, if not more, practice and skills improvement as surfing, or any physical sport for that matter.

There are many books and teachers who sincerely believe that if a novice speaker could just relax, she would decrease her stage fright and would thus become a better public speaker. Positive thinking, self pep talks, creative visualization, and self-hypnosis are often encouraged as means of improving your speaking skills. There is some research to support such claims, but there are no shortcuts to learning these formal presentational skills.

Without the practical experience, there can be little behavioral change. You can visualize, think, and dream all you want that you can ride a surfboard. But it's the practical, hands-on experience that enables you to paddle out, stroke just enough to match the speed of the wave, stand up, and maintain a trim position as you ride the swell to the beach.

That's what we'll be doing. Learning not only the whys but, equally important, the hows. We'll learn step by step how to do everything from walking up to the podium to returning to and sitting back in your chair.

2.9 Some Encouraging Words about Stage Fright

Now that you know some differences between public speaking and conversation, let's consider some encouraging words about stage fright.

It's Natural to Be Anxious

The human body reacts to any perceived threat with certain physical, psychological, and emotional responses. To not do so would be cause for serious concern. It's natural to feel some anxiety and fear as you face an audience.

You Are Not Alone

Everyone experiences some degree of stage fright before, during, and even after a speech. There is not one person in your audience who would not feel some degree of stage fright if she or he were in your place. So take heart: you're not alone. We're all in this together.

You Appear Much More Relaxed Than You Feel

When speakers view a video playback of a speech, they are all, with very few exceptions, surprised at how relaxed they appear on the monitor. Feedback from audience members immediately after the talk confirms this interesting phenomenon. The speaker experiences a great deal more internal anxiety than she exhibits externally to

others. You may feel really nervous on the inside, but chances are you don't appear nervous to your audience.

Have Something Important to Say

Abraham Lincoln once stated, "I shall never be old enough to speak without embarrassment when I have nothing to say." Those words still ring true today. If you feel strongly about what you are going to share with your audience, you are less likely to be fearful of them. Speak only when you have something important to say. That is an essential rule of thumb for public speaking, as well as in your daily life.

*To grow, we must
travel in the direction
of our fears.*

—JOHN BERRYMAN

Concentrate on What Is Said

Be more concerned with the main idea you are going to share with your audience than the exact wording of your message. Don't get fixated on the details of your talk. Instead, focus on the main idea of the speech. Keep looking at the big picture, not the minutiae.

Practice Your Speech

There are very few speakers who can give well-developed speeches in an impromptu fashion, with no prior practice. Practice is one of the most important factors in confident speaking for speakers at all experience levels. There is no substitute for actually practicing your speech in a standing position. Remember, public speaking is a physical skill as well as an intellectual, psychological skill.

Visualize Success

After you have practiced your speech two or three times, find a quiet place to relax and visualize yourself successfully delivering your presentation. Sit in a comfortable chair, relax your entire body, close your eyes, take a deep breath or two, and visualize the speaking situation. See the room, the audience looking at you, the podium, and yourself all dressed up, ready to communicate your message enthusiastically to your listeners. Visualize yourself beginning the introduction, effortlessly moving from point to point in the body of your speech and then concluding the talk with conviction. Imagine the audience smiling, nodding, and leaning forward in their chairs to hear every word you say. Finally, imagine the audience smiling and applauding warmly as you end your speech. Let the applause linger for a while in your ears, and then take a deep breath, open your eyes, and let your body remember the scenes from your visualization. Try this exercise once each night before you give your speech. It will make a difference.

Release Your Tension before You Speak

Some speakers jog in the morning before giving a speech. Others talk nervously about their anxiety to a friend the night before. There is a television news anchor in New York who goes through five minutes of light stretching exercises in her dressing room

before she goes on camera. Systematic relaxation exercises work for some, while other speakers prefer to simply pace backstage before they deliver their speech. One of the most effective relaxation exercises is simply to breathe deeply from your stomach. Keep your eyes open, but don't fix your gaze at any one thing. Just breathe deeply and evenly. You'll discover that all your bodily rhythms will become more calm and centered. Experiment to discover what works best for you. It's your life.

Experience Reduces Anxiety

The more speaking experience you have, the less likely you are to be frightened by your next speech. It's like that with most things. The more you do it, the less frightening it is. There once was a man named Clay in the central California farmlands who flew a crop duster, an airplane used to spray insecticides on the strawberry fields. Day after day, Clay would make that old red plane loop, spin, twirl, and zip over those strawberry fields. When asked if flying like that ever frightened him, he responded, "At first it did, but after 27 years of flying a duster, I've sorta gotten used to it." The same holds true for speaking.

The Audience Is on Your Side

Think of your own reactions when you've been an audience member. Did you want the speaker to fail? To look like a fool? Probably not. The vast majority of us want the speaker to succeed. We want the speaker to be interesting, informative, stimulating, and entertaining. The last thing we want is for the speaker to fail in her attempts to communicate. Audiences really are empathic, encouraging, and supportive, if given half a chance. One of the most 'uplifting thoughts you can have' as you face an audience is the belief that they wish you well and want you to succeed. They really are on your side.



2.10 Will I Ever Get Rid of These Butterflies?

We've talked about giving yourself permission to make mistakes and to overcome your fears, and still you're probably wondering, "Will I ever get rid of the butterflies once and for all?" Well, there's a well-known story about a 60-year-old woman who was enrolled in a public speaking class at a local college. On the night she was scheduled to deliver her first speech, she was overcome with terror at the prospect of talking in front of all those people. She couldn't bring herself to walk up to the front of the class when her name was called, so the instructor walked over to her and asked her how she felt.

The woman replied, "I'm scared. My stomach is filled with butterflies, and they're flying around chaotically." With some gentle encouragement from the teacher and students, the woman slowly walked to the front of the class and spoke to the group.

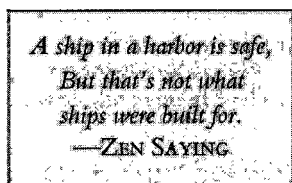
The following summer, that same woman was at a family gathering. During dinner, the woman's granddaughter asked, "Grandma, Daddy said you took a speech class and learned how to talk. He said you had butterflies in your stomach. Did you finally get rid of them?"

"No, I didn't get rid of those butterflies," the woman replied proudly, "but at least now they fly in formation."

Carl Jung wisely observed, "We rarely solve life's biggest problems. We merely outgrow them." In your life's journey, you will outgrow many of the fears and problems you are struggling with today. Your butterflies will most likely always accompany you when you speak in public, but with time and practice, they will be flying in formation.

2.11 Adventure and Growth, Not Safety

Many people run from new opportunities, especially if those opportunities involve thinking differently, behaving differently, and feeling differently. Most of us suffer needlessly because we fear the unknown. Rather than venture into the unknown, we



would rather resign ourselves to a situation that is painful because it is also familiar, predictable, and in some ways safe. But perhaps we were intended to explore the unknown in our life's voyage.

For most of us, learning how to speak in front of others involves venturing out into the unknown. We are like ships in a harbor, not really comfortable with the prospects of setting sail into open sea because every voyage requires some element of risk, and maybe change. But that's what learning is all about—changing, improving, and being freer than you were before.

Just keep in mind that the purpose of life is not to be perfect. It's to try new things as we grow older. To learn more about this world, our friends, and ourselves. We should learn to discover and communicate what we think, how we feel, and who we are as we journey during our lifetime.

Now it's time to leave the harbor.

2.12 Success in a Hybrid Public Speaking Class

With online courses becoming more popular due to geographical demands, institutional budgetary constraints, and student convenience, public speaking courses are often being offered as hybrid classes. A hybrid public speaking course will require that much or all of the content material, assignments, quizzes, and exams be accessed on the Internet. Online chat rooms or discussion boards will facilitate student/instructor discussion, interaction, and feedback, while students will meet in person with other students at an onsite location to deliver their speeches on specified dates. This hybrid approach to public speaking requires additional student responsibilities and commitment that a regular course might not. Here are seven suggestions that will help you achieve greater success in a hybrid public speaking class.

Determine Your Level of Hybrid Readiness

Hybrid courses are different from onsite, face-to-face courses, and your hybrid public speaking course may present some challenges that you need to consider if you are to

be successful in this approach to learning. Here are five questions you need to honestly reflect upon before you commit to a hybrid course.

1. Do you like to work independently?
2. Are you good at meeting deadlines?
3. Are you willing to ask for clarification and/or assistance?
4. Do you feel confident working with computers and the Internet?
5. Do you manage your daily and monthly schedules effectively?

If you answered “yes” to four or five of these questions, you will most likely be successful in meeting the requirements of your hybrid public speaking course. If, however, you answered “no” to two or more of the questions, you might reconsider using a hybrid approach to your public speaking course, especially if you have difficulty with the time management issues raised in questions two and five.

Make A Personal Commitment for Hybrid Success

A hybrid public speaking class does not offer the daily, face-to-face interaction with the instructor and students that a regular course does. All of the nonverbal communication cues that are so readily available in an onsite class are now largely replaced with PDF readings, links to related websites, online forums or chat rooms, and e-mail communications with your instructor and fellow students. This approach to learning offers less face-to-face interaction, stimulation, and encouragement and demands more self-motivation and discipline on your part.

You will need to make a personal commitment to the additional responsibilities and requirements your hybrid class will demand of you. That means that for the next semester, you will have to devote yourself to structuring your life to meet the assignment, exam, and speech deadlines without the in-person reminders and reinforcement that an onsite class offers. Make a personal commitment for success and stick to it every day of the semester.

Manage Your Time Effectively

The most essential element for success in your hybrid public speaking course is time management. Simply put, if you manage your time effectively, you can succeed in completing your hybrid public speaking course. If you don’t manage your time effectively, you will be less likely to succeed. Here are four helpful suggestions for effective time management.

First, construct a semester-length calendar generated from the course syllabus assignment deadlines for your class. Note *every* reading, homework assignment, online forum/discussion, quiz/exam, and speech deadline for the entire semester on your calendar. Use color coding of due dates to help you indicate the type of assignment or work. You might even place reminders of assignment due dates three days ahead. In other words, three days before a big assignment or speech is due, give yourself a heads-up reminder.

Second, conduct a daily and weekly check of assignments that are due. Your beautiful semester calendar won’t do you any good if you don’t check it once in awhile. I suggest that you check it daily and keep on top of all of your class responsibilities.

You can even schedule in weekly “homework time” periods in a specific color so you can “see” when you should be working on each assignment, day by day. It’s best to assign your “homework time” periods in one or two hour blocks so you have adequate time to complete assignments, without burning out.

Third, elicit the help of a friend to hold you accountable to your semester calendar—someone to ask you each week if you’ve been following your homework calendar for the course. It’s amazing how powerful knowing that someone will be asking you every Sunday night for the entire semester if you’re current on all of your assignment preparations and submissions can be. That’s what friends are for.

And fourth, submit *ALL* of your assignments, exams, and speech material on time. This is the secret to online success. More than anything else, submit all work on their due dates. Better yet, submit all work one or two days early, if possible. This not only indicates to the instructor that you are responsible, committed, and a little neurotic (in a good way), it also will give you a feeling of accomplishment and pride (in an even better way). Remember, if you manage your time effectively, the hybrid public speaking course can be a wonderful experience. If not, you’d better change your time management practices right now. I mean, right now.

Establish a Relationship with Your Instructor Early On

You might be reluctant to visit your instructors during office hours, but you need to make changes when it comes to a hybrid course. If your instructor holds office hours, visit him or her during the second week of the semester. By that time, most of the initial confusion of the first week of classes has settled, and both you and your instructor are in a place where you can meet one another in a more relaxed atmosphere. It will be beneficial for you to shake hands with your professor, get a feel for his or her personality, and establish the beginning of a relationship. Since your face-to-face interactions with your professor will be limited in a hybrid course, meeting him or her in person during the second week will take the mystery out of the relationship, and you’ll be more apt to communicate online or in person if the need should arise.

You might even visit your professor a couple of times more during the semester, just to touch base, clarify any questions you might have, and glean any pearls of wisdom his or her knowledge and experience can afford you. Communicate with your instructor, in person. It will make a big difference.

Participate in Class: Online and In-Person

In addition to submitting all of your work on time, one of the things you can do to really benefit from a hybrid public speaking course is to participate in all of your online forums, discussion groups, and e-mail communications. Since there is little face-to-face interaction with the instructor and students, your participation in all online assignments is vital to your contribution and success in the class. Keep current on all online assignments, feedback discussions, and forums. Contribute your responses, feedback, and opinions in a manner that is clear, meaningful, and respectful. Refrain from arguing online. Keep your remarks positive and your attitude uplifting. Since the instructor and students cannot see your face, your words will have to communicate your genuine and positive attitude. One final suggestion, think before

you click the “Send” button on any online correspondence, especially if the discussion gets heated or intense. Once a message is sent, it can never be erased. So pause before you hit the “Send” button.

On the days you meet face-to-face with the instructor and other students, don’t be intimidated or reluctant to contribute. Arrive to the classroom 5 or 10 minutes early and greet the instructor and other students. Sit toward the front of the room. Look for ways you might be helpful in getting the room arranged or the class organized. Ask the instructor if he needs any help. Contribution to the class begins even before the instructor welcomes the students.

Most likely, your face-to-face meetings will involve the presentation of various speeches. Be positive in all of your nonverbal communication. Pay attention to each speaker. Smile at the speaker. Nod your head in affirmation. Ask a question after each presentation if there is a Question and Answer session. Look for two or three things to compliment as each student speaks. And volunteer often to verbally compliment speakers after their speeches. Do all you can do to make the face-to-face onsite experience enlarging, friendly, and supportive. Your fellow students and instructor will be glad you did, and so will you. Make a positive difference in all that you do.

Establish Face-to-Face Support

In some hybrid public speaking classes, the instructor will assign you to a class group or “family” that you are required to meet with, in person, a number of times during the semester, in addition to the scheduled onsite speaking days. These face-to-face meetings with your class group add a personal dimension to the course experience for discussion, speech practice, and support.

If your instructor does not provide the opportunity for non-speaking-day, face-to-face group meetings, you might want to establish your own face-to-face support with two or three other students enrolled in your course.

During the first day or two of onsite speaking presentations, be on the lookout for two or three students who appear friendly, deliver good speeches, and participate in the discussions. Approach two or three of those students after class and ask them if they’d be interested in forming a small group to meet occasionally to discuss the class, practice speeches, and be encouraging of one another. You’d be surprised how delighted and willing students will be to join such a group.

Your meetings don’t have to be formal, long, or numerous. Volunteer to have the first meeting at your house, dorm, or apartment. Provide some chips and soft drinks. And just see how the first meeting goes. It’s best to meet every two or three weeks for one hour to discuss assignments, study for tests, or just touch base. Your group can be especially helpful if you practice your upcoming speeches in front of one another and provide some feedback on the practice speeches. Whatever your group does, remember that the purpose is to support and encourage one another in this journey of public speaking. And you might just make a friend in the process.

Finding Out-of-Class Speaking Opportunities

Your instructor might require that one or more of your speech presentations be delivered and recorded to an out-of-class audience. This type of speaking assignment

requires some planning and additional effort on your part. Here are four suggestions that will make any out-of-class speaking assignment a successful one.

First, review the requirements for your out-of-class speaking assignment. What are the requirements in terms of speech purpose, type of audience, minimum size of audience, time limits, recording requirements, and due date? The answers to many of these questions will determine your approach to planning for the out-of-class speech.

Second, you will need to locate an audience for your speech. In some instances, instructors will permit you to deliver your speech to a group of students from your hybrid class or to a group of your friends. But the majority of instructors will have you locate an existing group to serve as your audience. Here's where many students in hybrid public speaking courses want to throw up their hands in disgust and drop the course because they can't think of any audiences. But slow down, take a deep breath, and be creative in your approach to this requirement.

There are many audiences within a few miles of where you're sitting right now that would be happy to have you deliver an interesting informative or persuasive speech. Consider contacting community service groups such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis International, Soroptimist International, Knights of Columbus, Junior League, and the League of Women Voters. You can contact local political groups such as the Young Democrats, Young Republicans, and Young Libertarians. Consider reaching out to interest groups such as the Sierra Club, the National Rifle Association, Greenpeace, and the 4H Club. If you want to have a fun time scanning hundreds of interest groups, just Google "local interest groups," and you have enough to fill a Friday evening. Local churches often host weekly lunches where guest speakers are encouraged to present brief presentations on a topic of interest.

You can often give a presentation to a church youth group or college group, and the topic of your speech doesn't have to be religious in nature so long as it's relevant to the audience. You might even consider contacting a local company or corporation that hosts "brown bag" luncheons with a local guest speaker and sharing an interesting or relevant topic. And finally, you might even ask one of your former or current college instructors if you can serve as a guest speaker in one of his or her classes if your topic is related to their course content. There are hundreds of potential audiences within 25 miles of your home if you just invest a little research and effort.

Third, you will need to record your speech. Once you've located an audience of appropriate size to listen to your speech, you will need to record the speech so that your instructor can view your presentation for evaluation. Make sure you understand and can accommodate the recording requirements. Whether you are required to submit your speech on a flash drive, e-mail it to your instructor, or download it to YouTube or some other online site, make certain that you know how to accomplish this very important task. If you don't or are uncertain, contact your instructor to clarify or receive further instructions. This is the time to learn the process—not on the day of your off-site speech.

Fourth, have a friend or fellow student record your speech. Whether you use a camcorder, tablet, or smart phone to record your speech, it's easier to have an assistant who understands the requirements of the assignment rather than try to get one of the audience members to volunteer to record your speech a minute before you deliver your presentation. Have your assistant record the entire audience before you

are introduced to serve as evidence for the audience size and frame your entire body during your presentation so your instructor can see as much of your delivery as possible. Also have your assistant record the applause and any questions and answers that follow your speech. Remember to treat your assistant to lunch or dinner after the event. You can never be too grateful.

An out-of-class speaking assignment could be viewed as one extra headache in your attempts to complete the course. Another way of looking at it is that it can be an opportunity to learn some real-world skills, to provide relevant and helpful information to an appreciative audience, and to achieve a level of personal accomplishment that is not always discovered in a college classroom. Who knows: someone in your audience might even offer you another opportunity to speak. This could open up a whole new career for you. Be positive. Be open to what life has in store for you.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

1. **Giving yourself permission**

Review your responses to the 20 statements in the permission list. Select one item that you did not agree with. Read the statement aloud five times in a definite, confident voice. Close your eyes and imagine you are actually experiencing the situation described in the statement. For example, "I give myself permission to not know all the answers." Imagine being asked a question by a teacher and simply responding, "I don't know." Imagine feeling comfortable with your response. Imagine the teacher smiling and saying, "That's okay. I don't know the answer either." Imagine that you and the teacher both begin to laugh. How did that feel to you? Try another permission statement if you had more than one "no" response.

2. **A different cultural perspective**

Ask an individual from a different cultural background about his or her attitudes and feelings about the permission list presented in this chapter. How does his or her culture perceive the ideas raised by the statements in the permission list? How do you feel about his or her responses?

3. **Imagining the worst**

Imagine you are delivering a five-minute speech about programming a VCR to a group of 25 high school seniors. Halfway through your speech, you draw a blank—you can't remember what you were going to say. What is the worst thing (or things) that could happen? Be specific. List all of the horrors that could happen. Look at your list. How would you respond to each of the items on your list? Be strong. Be assertive. Tell those high school seniors a thing or two. Did any of the audience members come to your rescue? How do you feel? Was it all that bad?

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. **Receiving permission**

Pair up with another student in class and take turns granting one another permission for the statements from the permission list. If you responded "no" to

any statement on your list, have your partner grant you permission to do that behavior. For instance, have your partner tell you in a firm and definite tone of voice, "I, (name), give you permission to make mistakes!" Ask her to say the statement three or four times. How did it feel? What did you think? After your partner has repeated this process with three or four other statements you disagreed with, switch roles and give your partner permission statements. Be prepared to share your reactions to this assignment in class.

2. Group sharing: letting others know what you fear

The class is to be divided into groups of five students each. Each student is to share three or four things he or she fears. As each individual shares a specific fear, other students in the group can raise their hands to indicate that they too share that same fear. You'll be surprised at how many others share not only your fear of public speaking but other physical, psychological, and emotional fears as well. You are not alone. The group members can also discuss how they cope or deal with these fears.

3. You appear more relaxed than you feel

This exercise will be videotaped in your class. Give an informal 30-second talk about your public speaking fears. You can share anything you'd like during this brief talk. After the entire class has spoken, view the presentations *without* sound. What did you look like? Did you look as anxious or frightened as you felt? How did the other students appear while they were speaking? Discuss your responses to this activity in class.

4. Worst nightmare speech

Make a list of the five most terrible things an audience could do to you while you're speaking—throw paper, walk out of the room, shout criticism, sleep, "boo" and "hiss," or laugh. This will be like your worst nightmare. But, you'll discover, it's not that bad. Assign members of the class to role-play your "terrible" behaviors while you are speaking. Give an informal 30-second talk about a happy childhood memory and let the students act out their roles (the horrible behaviors). How was it? Was the experience as bad as you thought it would be? Did you laugh? Did the audience laugh? What feelings do you have? How did the exercise change your attitude toward speaking? Be prepared to discuss your reactions to this assignment in class.

ORGANIZING YOUR SPEECH

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

-  Explain the concept "keep it simple"
-  Define public speaking
-  List the three principles of public speaking
-  Define the four speaking methods
-  Explain speech organization
-  Discuss the body of the speech
-  Discuss the introduction of the speech
-  Discuss the conclusion of the speech
-  Construct a speech outline
-  Construct speaking notes for a speech

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when everything seemed to hit all at once? A hundred things to do. Appointments to keep. Projects to complete. Unfinished business pressing in from all sides.

Sam's first year of teaching college was like that. He was 23 years old, teaching three classes as a part-time instructor at a local community college, attending graduate school, volunteering a couple hours a day as a teacher's aide at a local child-care center, and washing dishes at the Garrett Restaurant in the evenings. In addition, Sam was conducting communication workshops for college students every other Sunday at a local church.

Somehow, Sam managed to juggle all of those responsibilities for the first three months of the year, until gradually he noticed changes in his behavior. He was getting angry over little things. And he wasn't sleeping as well as he once had. Getting up in the morning was becoming more difficult, and Sam found himself just lying in bed staring at the ceiling after the alarm went off.

Sam has since learned that these are some of the telltale symptoms of depression. But at that time, all he knew was that getting up in the morning was becoming more and more difficult. Knowing that something was wrong, Sam wanted to talk to

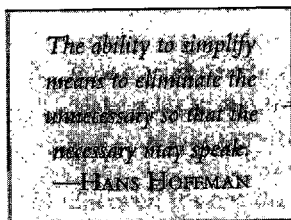
someone about his situation, but he didn't have the money to see a therapist. He was too embarrassed to share his problem with his family and too proud to discuss it with his friends. So he was stuck.

One Saturday morning, as Sam was sitting on the back porch of his second-story apartment, Annie shouted up to him with an invitation for coffee. Annie Loveless was a friendly 76-year-old woman who lived by herself in the apartment directly under Sam's. Annie was a gentle soul, and very wise. After her second husband died nine years earlier in Hollywood, she moved to northern California. The years had been good to her, and she seemed to glide through life with ease and grace.

After pouring a second cup of coffee, she asked Sam if he had been feeling well. He lied and said he was fine. A long silence followed his response, and Annie whispered, "I once heard that God invented time so everything wouldn't happen all at once." Sam smiled weakly and remained silent as he held his cup.

"You have a long life ahead of you," she continued. "Don't complicate and confuse your life with too many things, too many responsibilities. You need to ease your burden by cutting some things out. I think you need to simplify your life a little."

Annie was a good friend, and she had come to know Sam well during the year and a half he had lived at the apartment complex. Her words hit him with great force. During the next two weeks, Sam quit his dishwashing job at the restaurant, said good-bye to all those kids at the child-care center, and arranged to teach the college Sunday School class once a month instead of twice.



With only his teaching and graduate school to occupy the majority of his time, Sam felt as though the weight of the world had been lifted from his shoulders. His anger gradually subsided. His sleep began to return to normal. And soon, Sam discovered it was even easy to get out of bed in the morning when the alarm went off.

Not all responsibilities can be cast aside. Not all lives can be simple and uncomplicated in the web of relationships, ties, and duties we accumulate over the years. But we do have the freedom to make choices. We don't have to say yes to every request that is placed before us. Sometimes we need to choose simplicity over complexity. One or two good friends, instead of ten or fifteen. One or two organizational memberships, instead of seven or eight. A desk empty of clutter, rather than one piled high with old papers, books, unanswered mail, and yesterday's lunch wrappings. One single painting adorning a wall, instead of five. There is beauty and freedom in simplicity.

3.1 Keep It Simple

A young pastor, intent on impressing the congregation with his theological education, developed a lengthy, complicated, and verbose sermon style. The congregation would stir restlessly, eyeing the clock on the wall as this young pastor droned on and on, bringing up point after point after point.

This continued for some time, until one Sunday morning, the pastor's wife, also frustrated with his long sermons, slipped him a note before he went up to speak. At the top of the note was written "KISS." He smiled as he glanced over at his wife. Then he noticed at the bottom of the note, "Keep It Simple, Stupid!"

Hopefully, you will never receive such a note. But the recommendation to "keep it simple" is one of the wisest bits of advice you will ever receive.

Your speech must be structured so that is easy to follow if you are to accomplish your goal of having the audience listen to your words and remember your points and recommendations.

Far too many novice speakers talk in a style that is difficult to follow. The listener gets lost in a maze of unrelated thoughts and ideas, with no clear theme connecting the endless parade of words. We often lose interest, and perhaps become annoyed with a speaker who cannot present his or her thoughts in a readily understood fashion. Before we examine the basic parts of any speech, let's look at the fundamentals of public speaking.

3.2 Public Speaking

Public speaking is defined as speaking before an audience. There are three primary purposes for giving speeches: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. College lectures, a winery tour, and a demonstration of flower arranging are speeches that primarily inform. Examples of persuasive speaking include a fund-raising talk for the Asian Club on campus, a speech advocating blood donation, and a sales presentation for the latest computer software. After-dinner speaking and comedy club acts are examples of speeches that entertain. Usually, speeches are technically a combination of all three, but the primary goal of a given speech is to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

3.3 Three Principles for Public Speaking

Before we begin discussing the various ways you can speak to an audience, three principles for public speaking will set you on the right path for giving effective speeches. For effective speaking, you should put the audience first, speak deep from the heart, and leave your audience wanting more.

Put the Audience First

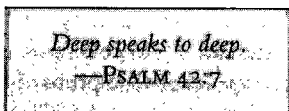
The most important secret to successful public speaking is to put your audience first. It's a matter of having the right attitude. Many beginning speakers spend far too much time focused on themselves. They worry about how they'll sound, how they'll come across, and what the audience will think of them. Their focus is on self. Too often in relationships, dating, and marriage, we hold a similar "me-first" attitude, and the results can be damaging.

To be more effective, and less anxious, we need to shift the spotlight off of us as speakers and focus it instead on our audience. Our attention should be on the people who will listen to our speech. So when you begin thinking about a speech you will be giving, think in terms of your audience first. Who are they? What are they interested in? How do they feel? What do they think? How might I instruct them? How can I help them? How might I encourage them? This shift in focus not only helps your public speaking, but it also can improve your relationships as well.

Deep Speaks to Deep

The second secret to successful speaking is that “deep speaks to deep.” Whenever you have an opportunity to address an audience, whether it’s a one-minute impromptu speech at a wedding reception or a formal presentation at a dinner banquet, don’t waste your audience’s time on trivial matters. Our lives are already saturated enough with the insignificant details of celebrities’ lives, frivolous e-mail, *Saturday Night Live* characters, and the tedium of never-ending electronic gizmos and doodads.

Instead of adding to the trivia, invite your audience to consider topics of importance. Talk about subjects that really matter to you, deep in your heart. Select stories from your life and from your research that move the heart and challenge the mind. Share thoughts and feelings that are significant, are meaningful, and, in the end, matter. Every person in your audience, no matter how he or she appears on the outside, is on the same journey as you, from birth to death, consciously or unconsciously trying to find meaning in this life and attempting to make sense of it all. Appeal to that part of your listener. If you do, your audience will respond, because whether they realize it or not, they are moving through deep waters in this lifetime. Share important topics, for deep speaks to deep.



Leave Your Audience Wanting More

There’s an old saying that “the more you say the less you say, and the less you say the more you say.” A speaker who goes on and on, and on and on, with little or no regard to the bored and restless responses of the audience can actually cancel out any positive contribution or effect he or she has had on the audience.

Even a dynamic speaker, with significant material, can eventually cause a once appreciative audience to become restless, frustrated, and even angry if the speech doesn’t end within a reasonable length of time. What’s a reasonable length of time? That depends on the occasion, the speaking environment, the speaker, and the audience. But here’s when our first principle of public speaking comes in handy—put the audience first. Consider your audience. Observe them as you speak. Do they look bored? Tired? Restless? Or even frustrated? If they do, bring your speech to an end. No use talking your audience to death. Know when to stop.

When preparing your speech, put the audience first. Know what you want to say, and say nothing more. Don’t use all the material you researched, although it might feel good to show off your efforts. Instead, select only the best material. Then, stay focused. Keep to your point. And conclude your speech. Bigger is not necessarily better. Longer is not necessarily more helpful or instructive. Observe the time limit of your speech, and don’t go over it. In fact, end before the allotted time. Instead of giving a 20-minute speech, end at 17 minutes. Instead of giving a 10-minute speech, conclude at 8 minutes. Your audience will never rush the podium in a rage if you end a little sooner than expected. But they might do so if you drone on and on.

Avoid having your audience grumble, “When’s she going to quit?” or “Isn’t he finished yet?” Instead, earn their ultimate compliments—“I wish she’d spoken longer” or “I hope he’ll speak again.” Always leave your audience wanting more of you, not less.

3.4 Four Speaking Methods

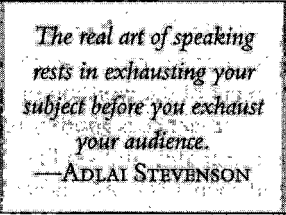
Now that we've examined the three principles of public speaking, let's look at the different styles or methods of delivering a speech. The four basic methods or approaches are manuscript, memorized, impromptu, and extemporaneous.

Manuscript Delivery Method

The manuscript delivery method consists of reading a speech from a text or manuscript. The speech is written word for word, and the speaker does not stray from the prepared text as he or she reads to the audience.

One advantage of this delivery method is that the content of the speech is guaranteed so long as the speaker sticks to the text. This could be important if the exact wording of a speech is vital, as in scientific presentations or political addresses.

There are many disadvantages to this style of speaking. The obvious disadvantage to manuscript delivery is the lack of natural, spontaneous delivery on the part of the speaker. Eye contact is decreased because most speakers using this method read the entire speech, word for word, instead of establishing eye contact with their audience. Animated gestures, facial expressions, and body movement are limited by this style of speaking. Spontaneous speaker response to audience feedback is not easily attained with this delivery method, as the text is already determined. We've all known professors who relied on this style of lecturing, semester after semester, year after year.



*The real art of speaking
rests in exhausting your
subject before you exhaust
your audience.*
—ADLAI STEVENSON

Memorized Delivery Method

The second method of delivery is memorized. In this style, the speaker memorizes the text of a speech, word for word, and then recites the speech without the use of a manuscript.

One advantage of the memorized delivery method is that the speaker is able to look at the audience more often because he no longer needs to rely on reading the manuscript that is in front of him. The speaker is also more spontaneous in gestures and body movement. This method is used by actors and Disneyland tour guides, to name a few.

The disadvantages of this method are many. Unless you are gifted at memorization, it's difficult to commit to memory even the briefest of talks. Memorization requires a great deal of time and effort, even for the best of speakers. To make matters worse, once you've memorized the speech, you face the possibility of forgetting a part of the speech when you're speaking.

Once the speaker forgets just one word, everything that followed that particular word is out the window. Swoosh . . . into the universe, never to be seen again. The speaker usually goes blank. And that's one of the most pitiful looks you can ever see on a human being—just *blank*. Don't let this happen to you.

Impromptu Delivery Method

Impromptu speaking consists of speaking to an audience on the spur of the moment, without prior preparation or practice. Most public speaking nightmares involve sadistic

variations on this style of speaking, with hundreds of shrieking demons dancing around you, as you stand on the stage, naked, struggling to find words, any words, to begin your talk.

Doesn't sound like there's anything good or of redeeming value about impromptu speaking. But nothing could be further from the truth. Once mastered, impromptu speaking can change the way you see yourself and how you communicate with others. The confidence you receive from being skilled in impromptu speaking can change your self-concept.

Extemporaneous Delivery Method

Of the four methods of speaking, the extemporaneous method is perhaps the best style for most public presentations because it utilizes the best aspects of the other three, while balancing their respective weaknesses. Extemporaneous speaking is speaking that is prepared and practiced ahead of time, but for which the exact wording isn't determined until the speaker delivers the speech.

The speech is researched and outlined ahead of time. Normally, the outline contains only 25–30 percent of the total words that will be delivered in the speech. Usually, full-sentence outline structure is used, with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This outline is the skeleton of the speech and the meat of the talk; the other 70–75 percent of the wording isn't exactly determined until the speaker delivers the speech.

Practice is another requirement for extemporaneous speaking. Once the speech is researched and outlined, the speaker practices the speech—first with the outline and then with only note cards. Many extemporaneous speakers deliver their entire speeches from only one or two 4 × 6-inch note cards containing a brief key-word outline of points.

The speech should be practiced at least five to seven times in its entirety. Too little practice doesn't provide the command of the main points of the talk and the general flow of the speech. Too much practice increases the probability that the speech will begin to sound memorized. You need to balance the two extremes as far as practice is concerned. There should be balance in speech practice, as in life.

Once the speech has been prepared and practiced, the speaker is ready to deliver it. The primary advantage of the extemporaneous style of speaking is that the speaker is organized and knows what points need to be covered, much like the manuscript and memorized speaking methods—but without the loss of natural delivery and the threat of forgetting the words and content. Furthermore, the speaker has the spontaneity of impromptu speaking, without the added burden of having to create the speech while standing in front of the audience. The extemporaneous delivery method is the style you will most likely use in your public speaking class.

3.5 Speech Organization

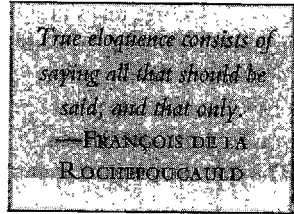
Now that we have reviewed the fundamentals of public speaking, let's look at how to organize a basic speech that is easy for your listeners to follow.

More than 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato said that every speech should have only three parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion—just like

our existence: birth, life, and death. This simple formula for speech organization still holds true today. Whether you're giving a 2-minute impromptu talk at a wedding reception or a 20-minute sales presentation to a group of prospective buyers, the organization of your speech should be the same.

Before launching into a more detailed examination of each of these three components, let's preview the basic functions of the introduction, body, and conclusion.

The *introduction* should capture the attention of the audience, clearly state what your speech is about, and preview the main points of your talk. Your introduction should comprise only 10–15 percent of your total speaking time. The *body* of the speech contains the two or three main points of your talk, along with the supporting material necessary to develop each point contained in the body, and with clearly stated transitions between each point. The body of the speech should make up 75–85 percent of your total speaking time. The *conclusion* of the speech presents a summary of your main points and a final thought to leave with your audience. The conclusion should be brief and should comprise only 5–10 percent of your total speaking time.

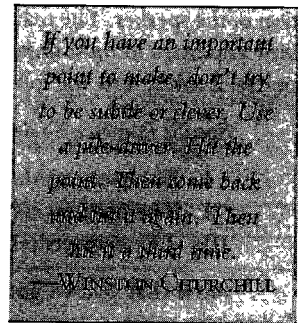


3.6 The Body

We'll examine the body of the speech before we discuss the introduction. This may seem a little odd, but we need to realize that we can't work on our introductory attention getter and preview of main points until we know what the main points will be and how they will be organized. Let's begin with the main-point selection and organization.

Main-Point Selection

The specific purpose of the presentation, often referred to as the *thesis statement*, states the purpose of the speech and divides the speech into its key parts or main points. The remainder of the body of the speech develops, clarifies, explains, or proves those main points. Let's examine one specific purpose.



Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about three uses of public speaking training.

As you see, the specific purpose establishes the goal in speaking (to inform the audience) and what you want to share (three uses of public speaking training). What are those three uses? They constitute the three main points of the speech. In complete sentence form, those three points are

Main Points

- I. Public speaking improves your presentational skills.
- II. Public speaking helps you become more effective in business.
- III. Public speaking improves your self-image.

Selecting main points is not difficult, so long as you remember that each of the implied areas of the specific purpose will be one of the main points of your speech.

Let's have you try your hand at providing three main points for a specific purpose statement. Suppose you had to share with your audience three things that make you happy—any three things that bring you joy, make you feel good, give you a rush. The specific purpose statement would be

Specific Purpose: To share with the audience three things that make me happy.

Now, complete the main points with three things that make you happy. Use short, complete sentences for each point.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

That wasn't too difficult, was it? You've just completed outlining your first main-point structure for the body of an informative speech. Not bad!

Main-Point Organizational Patterns

For your purpose as a beginning speaker, the following five main-point orders will most likely suit your needs: topical order, chronological order, spatial order, advantage-disadvantage order, and problem-solution order. Each of these five main-point organizational patterns is designed to present your main points in a way that is easy for the audience to understand and remember and satisfies the requirements of your specific purpose.

Topical Order. With topical order, the order of the main points is left to the discretion of the speaker. The main points can go, for example, from specific to general or from least important to most important. Often, the topic suggests its own arrangement of main points. Look at how the following example makes use of this organizational pattern.

Specific Purpose: To describe three characteristics of a good marriage.

- I. The partners share in open communication.
- II. The partners support the personal growth of each other.
- III. The partners resolve conflict in a nonthreatening manner.

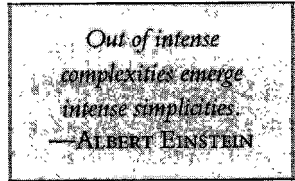
Now that you've gotten the hang of topical order, let's have you complete the following:

Specific Purpose: To discuss three things I appreciate about my college education.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Chronological Order. Chronological order is the kind of organizational pattern in which the main points follow a time order or sequence. It shows your audience there is a definite order in which the main points develop. The order of main points is not left to the discretion of the speaker but rather is determined by the process itself.

This type of organizational pattern works well with speeches that describe how something is made, how something happened, or how something works. Notice the chronological order in the following example:



Specific Purpose: To explain how to bake cookies.

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

Now, try your hand at providing the main points for the following specific purpose, utilizing time order:

Specific Purpose: To explain how I wake up in the morning.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Spatial Order. The third organizational pattern we examine in this chapter is spatial order. In spatial order, the main points are arranged in physical or geographical sequence. This pattern could be employed in a speech that described the floor plan of your house, the digestive tract of the human body, or the structure of a guitar. See if you can visualize the spatial structure in the following example:

Specific Purpose: To describe the arrangement of the Town Hall.

- I. The first floor contains the receptionist area and clerks' offices.
- II. The second floor houses the city officials' offices.
- III. The third floor is where the city records are stored.

How would you list the main points for the following specific purpose statement?

Specific Purpose: To describe the three parts of a whole egg (not a scrambled egg).

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Advantage-Disadvantage Order. The fourth main-point order is advantage-disadvantage. There might be a time when you want to present both sides of a case or proposal. The purpose of your speech would be to fairly and equally communicate the pros and cons of an issue or case. Here's an example of advantage-disadvantage main-point order.

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the advantages and disadvantages of enrolling in a summer school class.

- I. There are advantages to enrolling in a summer school class.
 - A. A summer school class enables you to focus your attention on one subject.
 - B. A summer school class is completed in only four to six weeks.

- II. There are disadvantages to enrolling in a summer school class.
 - A. A summer school class requires longer daily class meetings.
 - B. A summer school class requires three times the daily homework.

See if you can think of the subpoints for this advantage-disadvantage speech.

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the advantages and disadvantages of working full-time while attending college.

- I. There are advantages to working full-time while attending college.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
- II. There are disadvantages to working full-time while attending college.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

Problem-Solution Order. The fifth main-point order is problem-solution. Many times you will want to propose a specific solution to an existing problem. This is a persuasive speech structure that is discussed in a later chapter, but for now, we will briefly outline the format known as problem-solution order.

Proposition: You should support a federal law fining violators \$1,000 fine for running a red light at a traffic intersection.

- I. This federal fine will generate revenue.
- II. This federal fine will lower insurance rates.
- III. This federal fine will save lives.

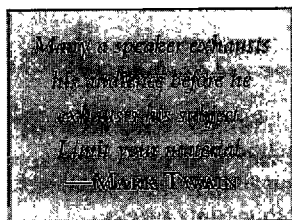
See if you can construct three points to this problem-solution proposition.

Proposition: You should support an 8 percent federal income tax.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Now that you've chosen your main points and the organizational pattern you will use, you need to turn your attention to selecting the developmental material. How your audience will receive, understand, and appreciate what you have to say will depend largely on how you develop the main points of the body.

In the next chapter, you will learn how to research a speech topic using the 4 × 6-inch note card method—storing each piece of research evidence on a note card. Let's assume you've already completed researching a speech topic and that you now have three times the amount of material required for your talk. Now we must begin the task of selecting the appropriate supporting material for your main points.



Selecting Your Developmental Material

The easiest method for selecting supporting material for your speech is called the "pile method." To use the pile method, simply place the various 4 × 6-inch research cards in one of three piles (if you have three main points), according to content. At the end of this process, each pile or stack will contain various definitions, statistics, expert testimony, examples, stories, comparisons, explanations, or visual aids that support a particular main point.

Now the fun part begins—the selection of the actual pieces of supporting material you will use for each main point. Here are some suggestions that will guide you in your selection as you stare at the various piles of research cards scattered in front of you.

Have at least one piece of evidence for each point. Provide at least one piece of evidence to support each of your main points. This will provide a solid base of support for your speech.

Provide a variety of supporting material. Don't just cite statistics in each point or tell anecdotes throughout your speech. Provide a variety of supporting material for your listeners to consider. If you researched your topic sufficiently, you should have little difficulty giving your audience a variety of supporting material.

Distribute your supporting material evenly. Develop each main point of your speech equally. Don't invest three pieces of evidence on one main point and not support the other two points. Provide the listener with an equal balance of supporting material for each point.

Adapt your material to the particular audience. This suggestion is vitally important if your message is to be received by your audience. Audiences respond favorably to information that relates to their interests, their knowledge, their demographics, and their attitudes. Adapt your research information in ways that your particular audience can understand, relate to, and appreciate. For instance, if you're talking about the advantages of public speaking to a group of Asian immigrants, who may be reluctant to speak, you could adapt your information and show how effective presentational skills can be desirable in job interviews, work performance, and academic success.

Transitions within the Body of the Speech

Now that you have your main points selected and developed with supporting material, you will need to move your listeners smoothly from one point to the next. Although there are numerous transitions available to serve this function, numbered transitions are the simplest and most informative type to use.

The *numbered transition* is a sentence stating which main point you will be presenting and its content. For instance, "The first characteristic of a good marriage is open communication" or "The third and final step in negotiation is the closing phase."

The numbered transition is useful because it tells the audience not only what you will be speaking about next but also where you are in the speech. This type of "signposting" encourages the audience to pay closer attention to what is being said and helps them retain the information.

A second technique that helps the audience move from one point to another is a moment of *silence* before you state your numbered transition. A two- or three-second pause between the last word of your preceding main point and your numbered transition serves as a welcome rest for your audience to digest what has been said.

After you end your introduction or one of your main points in the body of the speech, simply stop with a *two- or three-second pause* (one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three) and then proceed to your numbered transition. The use of pauses is a dramatic and visible sign of speaker confidence. Using the two- or three-second pause gives you time to breathe, focus, and relax. We should pause more in our daily lives, too.

3.7 The Introduction

Once the body of the speech is completed, you can begin working on the introduction. The introduction serves two primary functions. First, it captures the attention of the audience with an attention getter. Second, it previews the main points you will be presenting in the body of the speech. The introduction should take no more than 10–15 percent of the total speaking time.

The Attention Getter

The first objective of the introduction is to *capture the attention of the audience*. This can be accomplished by any number of attention getters, such as an audience question, an amusing anecdote, a startling statement, a startling statistic, a hypothetical situation, a quotation, or a joke. No matter which attention getter you choose, it should

*As long as you can start,
you'll be all right. The
juice will come.*

—ERNEST HEMINGWAY

relate directly to the topic you will be presenting, and it should appropriately match the overall tone of your speech. You wouldn't want to begin a serious speech with a joke, nor would you start a humorous speech with a sad anecdote. Let's take a look at an example of types of attention getters.

Audience question. "How many of you have ever danced with a brown bear, ridden sidesaddle on a horse, or jumped through a burning hoop? Well, I have. And today, I'd like to speak about my career in the circus."

Amusing anecdote. "Two monks were walking toward a stream when they were approached by a beautiful woman. She asked if they could help her cross the swiftly moving water. The older monk agreed to help. He then carried the woman across the stream in his arms and let her go on the other side.

"As the two monks continued their journey for some time, the younger monk turned and asked the older monk, 'Why did you carry that woman across the stream? You know our vows don't permit us to touch women.'

"'I carried the woman across the river, that is true,' replied the older monk. 'But I let her go when we got to the other side. It seems that you are still carrying her.' Today, I am going to talk about letting go of past hurts."

Startling statement. "More individuals are murdered by people they know than by complete strangers. Although this may seem unbelievable, this statement is nonetheless true. Today, I am going to talk about murder in the United States."

Startling statistic. "In 1998, teachers in Japan ranked in the top 15 percent of all wage earners in that island nation. Today, I'd like to talk about the salaries of teachers in the United States."

Hypothetical situation. "Imagine yourself sitting on a warm, sandy beach in Hawaii. You can see the deep blue sea stretching out to the horizon. You can hear the waves in the distance, and the smell of the late afternoon ocean breeze surrounds you. A relaxed, wonderful feeling engulfs you. Stay there for a moment. Today, I'd like to share with you some highlights of my last trip to Hawaii."

Quotation. "Psychotherapist Heinz Kohut once said, 'The ability to soothe your own soul in the face of adversity is the most powerful skill you can develop in your lifetime.' Today, I'd like to speak about the benefits of positive self-talk."

Joke. "One of my problems is that I internalize everything. I can't express my anger, so I grow a tumor instead. Well, maybe I'm stretching the truth a bit, but I do have difficulty expressing anger. Today, I want to talk about the hazards of not expressing your anger."

There are many other attention getters you might consider as you construct your introduction. Other methods include referring to the occasion, referring to the previous speaker, building up suspense, using a visual aid, establishing common ground with the audience, pointing to a historical event, complimenting the audience, and stressing the importance of the speech topic. Remember that whatever attention getter you decide on, it should relate directly to the topic, and it should appropriately match the overall tone of the speech. Keep your attention getters relatively short because the entire introduction should comprise only 10–15 percent of your total speaking time.

Preview of Main Points

After you have given your attention getter, you should pause for one or two seconds and then present your preview of main points. The purpose of the preview of main points is to give your audience a foreshadowing of what's to follow. It prepares their minds to receive the points you will be speaking about. The preview of points should be only one sentence in length. A common mistake is to say too much in the preview, almost giving a mini-speech for each point previewed. Keep it brief and to the point—only one sentence. Here are some examples of acceptable previews of main points:

"The three steps to making cookies are gathering your materials, preparing your ingredients, and, finally, baking the cookies."

"The three parts of the guitar are the head, neck, and body."

"Running can improve your physical stamina, reduce psychological stress, and increase your spiritual awareness."

"The three components of a healthy relationship are caring, communication, and companionship."

After you've given the preview of main points; pause for one or two seconds before you state your first numbered transition. This pause will give your audience time to digest the preview of points.

3.8 The Conclusion

After you have finished your final point in the body of the speech, it is important to have a two- or three-second pause *before* you begin your conclusion. Actually say to yourself silently “one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three” before you start your conclusion. This brief pause will let your audience know that you will be ending shortly.

The first words out of your mouth during the conclusion will be your summary of main points. Please do not say, “In conclusion . . .,” or “I guess it’s time for me to quit,” or “Well, I’d better end now.” Those transitions into the conclusion are unnecessary and awkward.

Your conclusion should summarize your main points in one sentence and leave your audience with a final thought. The conclusion should require only 5–10 percent of your total speaking time. In a five-minute speech, that’s approximately 15–30 seconds. That might not sound like a great deal of time, but it will be sufficient to recap your points and provide the audience with a closing thought.

Summary of Main Points

The summary of main points should be a *one-sentence* review of the three or four points you made in your speech. One simple sentence will do. Nothing more. Here are some examples of main-point summaries:

“Today, I’ve shared the three steps to making cookies: gathering your materials, preparing your ingredients, and, finally, baking the cookies.”

“In my talk this morning, I described the head, the neck, and the body of the guitar.”

“So remember, running can improve physical stamina, reduce psychological stress, and increase spiritual awareness.”

“Today I spoke about the three components of a healthy relationship, which are caring, communication, and companionship.”

Final Thought or Appeal

After you have summarized your points, it’s best to leave your audience with one final thought. This thought can be a return to your attention getter, an appeal, a quotation, a vision for the future, or a call to action. The final thought shouldn’t be very long. Present a concise and focused thought for your audience to remember. This is not the time to begin another main point. Here are some examples of the various methods:

Return to attention getter. “Like the young man in my opening story who wanted to know the secret of living a long life, I hope you will examine your life and attempt to reduce the stresses in it.”

Appeal. “As we have seen, drug use among our teenagers is at a record high, and many of us adults have been denying its existence. Our denial will not rid us of the drugs. Our denial will not put the drug dealers in prison. Our denial will not save our children’s lives. It’s time that we opened our eyes and began thinking about the horrors of teenage drug use.”

Quotation. "John Steinbeck once observed, 'A marriage is like a journey. The certain way to be wrong is to think you control it.' I hope that you will relax a little more in your marriage or in your relationships in the future and follow the guidelines I've outlined this morning on how to give your spouse more personal space."

The secrets to successful speaking are to be organized, be brief, and then be seated.

—NORMAN THOMAS

Vision for the future. "I see a future for our club with 1,000 members, not just 28. I see a future in which our club will donate thousands of dollars to local charities, not just \$200. Our club will be a place for all women of Oakland to meet, build lasting friendships, and, most important, give something back to the community that provided us with our beginning. Do you see this vision also?"

Call to action. "The election is two weeks away. If you share my beliefs for a strong America, if you share my desire for a prosperous America, if you share my dream for a free America, I ask you to invest in the future of our great land. I ask you to contribute just \$100 to my campaign fund this very morning. My assistants will be distributing the contribution forms to you in a few moments."

Don't feel limited to these final-thought devices. You can use a combination of two of them, or make up your own final statement format. Remember to keep the final thought short and to the point, however. Don't ramble. Your final thought for a 5-minute speech shouldn't be longer than 30 seconds.

Once you have completed your final thought, smile and pause for two or three seconds and then walk back to your seat. If you are permitted a question-and-answer period, remain at the podium and wait for the applause to end. Once the applause has ceased, pause a second or two and then request questions from your audience. In either case, the pauses are very important. It shows your audience that you are in control.

3.9 Constructing Your Speech Outline

Now that we have introduced the various components of the introduction, body, and conclusion, we need to spend a few moments reviewing some guidelines for writing a speech outline. Although some professional speakers do not use any outline in the preparation of their talks, they are few in number. The majority of speakers, both beginning and professional, use some form of outlining to help them plan and test their speech ahead of time. The outline is your most important tool in constructing a well-developed and easy-to-follow speech.

The mission of life consists in the elimination of unnecessary things.

—LIN YUTANG

The *speech outline* is a short, complete-sentence model of your speech. From this outline, you can test the organization, logic, and development of your entire speech. The total number of words in your outline shouldn't exceed 30 percent of the actual number of spoken words in your speech.

Here are some guidelines that will assist you in your construction of a speech outline:

Use a standard set of symbols. As you organize the body of your speech, use a standard set of symbols. The main points of the speech will be divided by roman numerals (I, II, III), subpoints will be designated by capital letters (A, B, C), and minor headings will be designated by arabic numerals (1, 2, 3).

Use complete-sentence structure for major headings. Complete-sentence structure for your major headings will help test the logic and development of your speech structure. Although you can use a key-word outline note card when you deliver your speech, a full-sentence outline will permit an analysis of your main- and subpoint structure.

Each main point should reinforce or clarify your specific purpose statement. This is one of the most important tests of your speech outline. Does each main point actually develop your specific purpose statement by reinforcing or clarifying it? If a main point does not, it should not be included in your speech.

Each main point and subpoint should contain only one idea. If a main point or subpoint contains more than a single thought or idea, it will confuse you and your audience. The logic of your speech structure is weakened when you present multiple ideas in a main point or subpoint. If you see an "and" in one of your main-point or subpoint headings, you will need to decide on one of the two ideas to present, or you can split them into two headings if it's appropriate. For example:

- I. The second advantage that jogging offers is that it increases your physical endurance *and* your psychological well-being. (*Incorrect*—Notice the "and" in the sentence? Let's change it.)
- II. The second advantage that jogging offers is that it increases your physical endurance.
- III. The third advantage that jogging offers is that it increases your sense of psychological well-being.

Subpoints should support main points. Check to make sure that not only do your main points support your specific purpose statement, but your subpoints support your main points as well. This is called *subordination of points*. Each subpoint should be directly related to the main point it falls under. If not, it needs to go. For example:

- I. The second floor of City Hall houses the city officials.
 - A. The mayor is located in the west wing of the second floor.
 - B. The city manager is located next to the mayor.
 - C. *The city records are located on the third floor.*
(Point C does not relate directly to the main point. It needs to be placed under another main-point heading that deals with the third floor.)

Limit your main points to a maximum of four. Don't overburden your audience with too many main points. The average listener cannot remember more than three or four main points, regardless of the length of the speech. Three main points are usually best for any speech.

Write the introduction and conclusion word for word. Because the introduction is so important in capturing the attention of the audience and the conclusion needs to bring your speech to a concise ending, there is little room for ad-libbing or impromptu speaking. Therefore, your introduction and conclusion should be written out verbatim in the outline.

Limit the outline to 30 percent of the total speech wording. The entire number of words in your outline, introduction, and conclusion should not exceed 30 percent of your total speaking words. More than 30 percent will make your outline resemble a manuscript speech, and your final presentation will run the risk of having a manuscript or memorized delivery style.

Later in this chapter you will find a sample outline of a tribute speech. Notice the various components of the speech—the specific purpose, introduction, body, conclusion, and reference list.

3.10 Speaking Notes

When you're delivering your speech, you might feel more confident having a few notes up at the podium. If you do, here are some guidelines when constructing and using your speaking notes.

Use Note Cards

Use either 3 × 5- or 4 × 6-inch index cards when constructing your speaking notes. Don't use regular-size paper, because the size is more obvious and papers tend to make noise when handled. Index cards are easier to manage and won't fly off the podium if a breeze comes up. Number your note cards on the upper right-hand corner so you can quickly place them in the correct order if they get mixed up.

Use Key Words and Phrases

Your speaking note cards should contain only key words and phrases. Unlike your formal outline, you don't need complete sentences in your speaking notes. Instead of writing your entire introductory attention getter word for word, you can simply write, "Story about monks." Your preview of points can be a list of three words, rather than the entire sentence. Instead of writing out each main-point transition in the body of the speech, you can simply write, "I. Workshops" or "II. Career." In the same way, each of your subpoints can also be represented by one or two key words. The review of points in the conclusion can be listed once again as three or four words, and your final thought might be shortened to a couple of words or a phrase.

The purpose of the key-word approach is simply to jar your memory so you can quickly recall the main points of your presentation without all the details of your formal outline. You can also use your note cards to list the essential information of any evidence you'll be presenting. For instance, you need only list the documentation and the actual statistic or expert testimony you will present. Your note card can also indicate when you will be presenting any visual aids in your speech.

Use Delivery Reminders

In addition to displaying key words and phrases, your note cards can also remind you to pause, speak louder or softer, look at the audience, and a variety of other delivery guidelines. You can make “//” notations to pause before important points or simply write “PAUSE” in red ink. You might want to use “<” to remind yourself to speak louder or “>” to speak softer at certain points in your speech. Or you can write out the words “LOUDER” and “SOFTER” on your note card. It’s usually a good idea to remind yourself to “LOOK AT YOUR AUDIENCE” or “REMEMBER EYE CONTACT” every once in awhile on your speaking note cards. Some speakers simply draw two eyes in red ink occasionally on their cards to remind them to look at their audience.

Use Note Cards Sparingly

Remember, this is not a manuscript speech or a formal outline you’re trying to get on these speaking note cards—this is just key words and phrases. One to three words for every 15 seconds of speaking time is a good rule of thumb. So for a five-minute speech, 20 to 60 key words at most ought to do it.

SAMPLE TRIBUTE SPEECH OUTLINE

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MCCLENDON

Specific Purpose: To pay tribute to George McClendon.

Introduction

Have you ever spent a weekend with a Trappist monk who runs marathons? Well, I have! Today, I’d like to tell you about a man who influenced my life in a significant way. His name is George McClendon. George is a practicing Gestalt therapist in Watsonville, and I met him two summers ago when I was enrolled in one of his U.C. Extension courses. I’d like to tell you about his wonderful relationship workshops, his 20-year career as a Trappist monk, and his marathon running.

Body

- I. The first thing I want to share with you is that George McClendon teaches excellent relationship workshops.
 - A. His weekend relationship workshops for counselors emphasize a Gestalt approach to systems theory.
 - B. George conducts his workshops with wisdom and empathy.
- II. The second thing I want to share is George’s 20-year career as a Trappist monk.
 - A. George spent 20 years in an Oklahoma Trappist monastery.
 - B. He helped build the monastery from the foundation to the roof.
- III. The final thing I want to tell you about is George’s newfound interest in marathon running.
 - A. At age 53, he began jogging as a part-time hobby.
 - B. Six months later, he completed the Big Sur Marathon.
 - C. Randy Fujishin, in *Gifts from the Heart*, reminds us that, “We need to encourage our loved ones to grow—to follow their dreams.”

Conclusion

Today, I've talked about George McClendon's relationship workshops, his life as a monk, and his marathon running. He is truly an inspiring individual who has taught me to appreciate life and dream big dreams. I hope you get a chance to meet him.

References

Fujishin, R. 2003. *Gifts from the Heart*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Use Note Cards Openly

When referring to your note cards, don't try to hide them or glance away from your audience when referring to them. Be open about your use of the cards. Just don't rely on them too much. Simply place your cards on the podium in chronological order from left to right and glance down at them when you need to. That's all. They're in place if you need them, but they shouldn't prevent good eye contact and directness with your audience.

SAMPLE CORRESPONDING KEY-WORD OUTLINE**Introduction**

Weekend with monk? George.

Workshops, career, running

Body

I. *Workshops*

Gestalt approach

Wisdom, empathy

II. *Career*

Trappist monk

Built monastery

III. *Running*

Marathons at 53

Big Sur Marathon

(Fujishin reference)

Conclusion

Workshops, career, running

Hope meet George

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES**PERSONAL ACTIVITIES**

1. **Simplifying your life**

Make a list of all the duties, responsibilities, and chores you have to complete in the next week. Write down everything—from going to that job interview

to feeding the cats. Your list should be substantial. Now, circle the three tasks that are the most important—if you couldn't do any of the others, these are the top three you would need to complete. Now, underline the next three most important tasks. Don't cheat, only three of them! Cross out the remaining tasks. That's right, you have only six tasks you can do. The rest will go uncompleted, at least for the week. How would your life change if you could do only these six things? How do you feel? What would your week be like? On the day you die, you will leave 100 things undone.

2. Soothing the many sides of you

Get a piece of typing paper (or any $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ -inch paper) and fold it into thirds. Label the first column "BODY," the middle column "MIND," and the third column "SPIRIT." For each column, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of activities that you enjoy or find rewarding. For example, for "BODY" you might include bathing, eating, playing in the sand, flossing, stretching, and skipping pebbles on water. Do this for each column. Look at your lists. How does each feel? Have you done any of these activities lately? If not, which ones could you do today?

3. Organizing thoughts in other cultures

Ask an individual from a different culture how important the concept of clear, logical thought patterns is to him or her. Does she or he value critical thinking? How does this person feel about our emphasis on clear organizational patterns in speech construction? What forms of oral discourse or presentation are emphasized in his or her culture, if any?

4. Organizing your life's priorities

One of the most valuable life skills you can develop is your ability to distinguish between what is important to you and what is not. On a piece of paper, list 20 things you would like to accomplish this year. Then rate each item using the following scale: 1 = Vital, do immediately; 2 = Essential, do in the next week; 3 = Important, do in the next month; 4 = Nonessential, do in the next year; and 5 = Disregard, eliminate from the list. Limit your ratings to four of each of the five rankings. In other words, only four 1s, four 2s, and so on. This will force you to decide what is important and what is not. How did this exercise go for you? What did you learn about organizing your life by using priority rankings?

CLASS ACTIVITIES

5. Group discussion: five words or less

Divide the class into groups of five or six. Each group is to discuss for 10 minutes some aspect of communication suggested by the instructor. Students are free to express their thoughts and feelings, except no one is permitted to use more than five words during any given opportunity to address the group. No more than five words at a time. It's helpful in this exercise to count each of your five words on your fingers. This will give you a good feel for each word that comes out of your mouth. How does this way of talking feel to you? How do the other group members feel? Did you notice any communication interaction changes because of this limit? This may be the first time you have ever valued

the currency of your language. Remember, the more you say, the less you say. And the less you say, the more you say. Be prepared to discuss your reactions to this activity with the rest of the class.

6. Three highlights of your life speech

Construct a formal outline detailing the speech topic (specific purpose), "To inform the audience of the three highlights of my life." Remember to include supporting material in the subpoints of the speech. Prepare, practice, and present a three- to five-minute informative speech. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

7. The three sides of "me" speech

Prepare, practice, and present a three- to five-minute speech about interesting aspects of your physical, intellectual, and spiritual self. Review Personal Activity 2 in this chapter to get some ideas on how to develop your points. Your speech should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

SELECTING YOUR TOPIC

CHOOSING YOUR PATH

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 4.1** Explain the concept that it's your choice
- 4.2** Explain brainstorming topics
- 4.3** Discuss determining your speaking purpose
- 4.4** Identify the two elements of your specific purpose
- 4.5** Explain selecting your main points
- 4.6** Summarize the four areas of analyzing your audience
- 4.7** List ways to gather information about your audience
- 4.8** Complete a speech preparation questionnaire

Tyler waited for the last student to leave the classroom before he approached his teacher. "How can I help you, Tyler?" smiled the professor.

"Well, I can't think of a topic for my speech. I mean, there're so many possible topics, and yet I can't seem to think of a good one."

"A little overwhelmed?" asked the teacher.

"I guess so."

"Give me one topic you've been considering."

"I could talk about *Hamlet* since I wrote a paper on that play last semester," Tyler stated happily. "Then I wouldn't have to do any research."

"You could," nodded the teacher, "but convenience doesn't always provide you with the best selection."

"What do you mean?"

"There are times in life when you need to choose with your heart—to go beyond what is convenient, easy, or even logical," suggested the professor. "What moves your heart, Tyler? What makes you mad, glad, or even sad?"

"People who run red lights make me mad. And dads who leave their families and don't try to stay in touch with their kids makes me sad."

"I see," said the teacher. "How about glad? What makes you joyous?"

"Well, I love going out for coffee with friends. I really enjoy my advertising and marketing class. And I love playing my guitar." After a long pause, Tyler added, "I guess I'm most happy when I'm helping Pastor Steve with the Junior High Youth Group."

"Congratulations, now you've got some topics worth speaking about—topics that move your heart," said the teacher. "And when you deliver a speech with heart, it makes all the difference in the world."

"A speech with heart," smiled Tyler as he left the classroom.

The professor thought back to his first speech in college as he put papers into his briefcase and whispered, "And a speech with heart can even lead to a profession with heart."

4.1 It's Your Choice

Whether your speech is for a public speaking class, a sales presentation, an awards dinner, or a retirement roast, you will rarely be assigned a specific speech topic. It is more likely that you will be given a great deal of freedom and latitude in your selection of a topic.

On the surface, this may sound desirable. But it often presents the beginning speaker with one of the most challenging tasks in the public speaking process—the sole responsibility to choose, from the hundreds of thousands of possible subjects, one topic to speak on.

Sound easy? Maybe not. Many experienced speakers report this is the most difficult part of speech making—simply choosing something to talk about. Individuals experiencing difficulty at this point complain there are either too many topics or not enough. But no matter which of these two predicaments they find themselves in, they do not choose a topic.

That is where the trouble begins.

We're not going to examine the many possible psychological and emotional reasons individuals have difficulty deciding on speech topics, or anything else for that matter. It is apparent that indecision, and the immobility that follows, hampers many of us in our daily lives. Should I marry or not? Should I date this person or not? Should I leave the job or not? Should I stay in school or not? And the list goes on and on.

Indecision is something we must contend with in our daily lives, as well as in the speech-making process. But remember that indecision is a decision in and of itself—the decision not to decide. And that's okay. Many people spend a great deal of their lives not deciding.

But that will not work for your public speaking life. You must decide on a specific topic before you can begin preparing for your talk, so select a topic that you feel strongly about—a topic with heart. In this chapter, we examine the five steps involved in selecting your topic and choosing the main points for your speech. The five steps are (1) brainstorming possible topics, (2) determining your speaking purpose, (3) determining your specific purpose, (4) selecting your main points, and (5) analyzing your audience.

*Give the world the best
you have and the best will
come back to you.*
—MADLINE BUNCH

4.2 Brainstorming Possible Topics

The first step is to *brainstorm* possible topics. The primary purpose of brainstorming is to generate a large number of ideas without evaluation. In other words, the goal is to not judge your ideas as you write them down for consideration, but simply to come up with as many ideas as possible. This technique may feel strange initially because much of our daily energy is spent evaluating and judging the rightness and wrongness, the goodness and badness, the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of just about everything we experience.

The first task in brainstorming is to *get away to a quiet place* that is free from distractions and interruptions. You don't want friends talking, the telephone ringing, or the dog barking as you generate your list of ideas for the speech topic. Once you've found a quiet, private place to work—such as your office, kitchen, or dining room—get a pad of paper, a pen or pencil, and a kitchen cooking timer.

Set the timer for 10 minutes. The reason you need a timer is to focus your efforts for a specific period of time. Remember: "work expands to fill the time allotted," so if you're given three weeks to decide on a speech topic, you'll generally take the entire three weeks. Once the clock is set for 10 minutes, get comfortable with your pencil and pad and perhaps a cup of coffee or tea, and you're set.

The second task in brainstorming is to *get crazy* and write down anything that comes to your mind as a possible speech topic. Most people can think of one or two topics when faced with a blank sheet of paper, but get really crazy and write down *any* idea that comes to mind.

*Imagination is more
important than
knowledge.*

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

The most important requirement of this technique is to *free yourself from self-evaluation or criticism*. What will restrict and hinder you the most in selecting a speech topic is your negative response to your own suggestions and ideas. You need to give yourself permission to get a little loose and generate ideas, any ideas, no matter how wild or crazy. Let your handwriting get crazy too. Throw out all the restrictions you normally impose on yourself. As you get crazy during this second step of the brainstorming process, keep in mind the following four suggestions:

1. Don't evaluate or judge any of your ideas.
2. Quantity of ideas is desired, not quality.
3. The wilder the ideas are, the better.
4. Combine ideas to create new ones.

To give you a picture of what this process might produce, let's pretend that Yari has to speak on the topic of "public speaking." Let's see how many brainstorming topics he can generate in 10 minutes. Yari grabs a pencil, takes a sip of coffee, and she's off and running.

Fear
Notes
Being a president
Immigrants to America

Advantages of public speaking
Uses of public speaking training
Podiums
Training for public speaking
Talk show host
African Americans in television
Making money speaking
Being a teacher
Learning to think logically
Being persuasive
Ways public speaking can help me grow personally
Being a tour guide
Hip-hop music
Speech contests
Speaking as a lawyer
Public speaking professions
Being a speech coach for the movies
Being on radio
Tiger Woods
Being confident
Having people think I'm smart
Stage fright
Telling stories to others
Being funny
Getting a job as a sports announcer
Going into advertising
Giving speeches for the church
Teaching people to not be afraid of audiences
Middle East conflicts
Being a speech tutor
Sharing my feelings with others
Selling cars
Ways public speaking can improve my interaction with others

Buzz! The 10-minute alarm just went off. Pencil down, Yari. Good job! Now finish off that cup of coffee while we count your brainstorming topics. There are 37. A pretty productive brainstorming session. And who says there's nothing to talk about with the topic "public speaking"?

Now, you might have cheered for some of the items on his list and sneered at others, but that's your evaluating mind in action. And the first rule of brainstorming is for you *not* to evaluate any of the ideas or suggestions during this brainstorming process. Once you get the hang of not judging, the process really takes off.

After you've generated a long list of possible topics, you're set for the selection stage. Your task is to *select one topic from the list of topics*. You might want to take some time, a few hours to a couple of days, between your brainstorming session and the selection

step. Your brain may need a rest after that 10-minute brainstorming session, and it's good to leave the list for a while, just to give your unconscious time to mull it over.

After you feel rested, it's time to examine your list of possible topics and select the one that you'd like to speak about. As you look over your list, cross out the topics that you're not interested in or that might not be of interest to your particular audience. If possible, select topics you have previous experience with or knowledge of. Also, select topics you would enjoy researching.

Now Yari is set to begin this part of his task—eliminating the weak, flimsy, or unsound topics from her list. As she looks over the list, she eliminates the vast majority of brainstorming possibilities because she isn't interested in them or she doesn't possess a great deal of previous experience or knowledge of them. Yari finally selects three topics he finds interesting and is willing to spend time researching. The topics are "Being a speech coach for the movies," "Ways public speaking can help me grow personally," and "Uses of public speaking training."

After a day or two, she finally decides on the topic "Uses of public speaking training" as her speech topic. That's a topic of interest to her and of possible interest to her audience (college students in the beginning speech class).

We finally have a topic for the speech. We are now in a position to determine our speaking purpose, the second step in the process.

4.3 Determining Your Speaking Purpose

Once you've determined the topic of your speech, you must decide what effect you want to have on the audience. It's important that you decide on that effect because it will determine how you phrase your specific purpose statement and the selection of your main points.

As you will recall, the three purposes of speaking are to inform, persuade, and entertain. Although a speech may contain a little of each category, you will need to decide which *primary effect* your talk will have on the listeners. Will it be to inform? Persuade? Or entertain?

For the topic we've chosen, "Uses of public speaking training," we could choose any one of the three primary purposes for speaking. We could inform the audience about the uses of public speaking training. We could attempt to persuade our audience that public speaking does have many practical uses. Or we could entertain the audience by sharing humorous uses of public speaking training.

*Nothing is particularly
hard if you divide it into
small jobs.*

—HENRY FORD

Yari chooses to inform her audience about the uses of public speaking training. She doesn't want to persuade her audience or entertain them. Her speaking purpose is to inform. Now she's ready to go to step 3.

4.4 Determining Your Specific Purpose

Now that you've decided on your speaking purpose, you must determine your specific purpose. The *specific purpose* states exactly (1) what you want to do with your audience and (2) what you want to tell them. For instance, the specific purpose "To

persuade my audience to get annual physical examinations" specifies both goals. First, it states what you want to do with the audience—"to persuade." And second, it states what you want to tell them—"to get annual physical examinations." Notice that the specific purpose is stated in the infinitive form of a verb (to . . .), so it clearly stipulates which of the three speaking purposes it is setting out to accomplish.

Here are some examples of specific purpose statements under their respective headings of speaking purposes.

<i>Speaking Purpose</i>	<i>To inform.</i>
<i>Specific Purpose</i>	To demonstrate how to change a flat tire.
	To report the results of a recent survey.
	To explain the art of flower arranging.
<i>Speaking Purpose</i>	<i>To persuade.</i>
<i>Specific Purpose</i>	To motivate my audience to jog a mile a day.
	To convince my audience to buy life insurance.
	To increase my audience's willingness to vote.
<i>Speaking Purpose</i>	<i>To entertain.</i>
<i>Specific Purpose</i>	To amuse my audience by explaining how to pig out.
	To amaze my audience with a demonstration of magic.

Let's return to Yari's speech topic—"Uses of public speaking training"—and put it into a specific purpose statement. Because she wants to inform her audience, Yari needs to state her specific purpose using the infinitive. The specific purpose becomes

"To inform the audience about the uses of public speaking training."

In the first part of the specific purpose, she specifies what it is she wants to do with the audience—"To inform the audience." In the second part of the specific purpose, she specifies what she wants them to know—"about the uses of public speaking training." After we have selected the main points of a speech, we will reword this second section of the specific purpose to reflect the actual main points we will use in the speech.

4.5 Selecting Your Main Points

Now that you have your specific purpose, you need to begin brainstorming possible main points for the body of the speech. The main points are those two or three supporting thoughts or ideas you wish to present in the body of the talk. These main points make up the skeleton or structure of the speech body and provide the direction the speech will take.

A common mistake beginning speakers make at this point of the process is settling for the first two or three main points that come to mind. And they don't think of any other main points. They stop the process right there and call it quits.

This is a mistake. Your first thoughts are not always your best, and this method of selecting main points runs the risk of missing better main-point possibilities that would surface only *after* you've researched the speech topic sufficiently. It is only after you have spent considerable time and effort researching your subject that the main points of your speech begin to appear. From this collection of researched information

you will begin to brainstorm the main points of your speech. The process of researching your speech topic will be covered fully in the next chapter.

Brainstorming Main Points

After researching your topic, the brainstorming technique you just learned can be extremely helpful. Instead of brainstorming possible speech topics, use the same technique to generate possible main-point ideas for your topic. Yari can begin the brainstorming process by using the specific purpose she has selected: "To inform the audience about the uses of public speaking training."

With a second cup of coffee in hand, Yari has set the alarm for 10 minutes, and, once again, she begins the brainstorming process. But this time, she's generating main points from the material she's gathered in her research efforts.

- Improves your speaking
- Get to listen to speeches
- Get to meet people in class
- Satisfy the oral requirement for State College
- My friend is in the class
- Learn to speak up in my other classes
- Become more skilled in my interpersonal interactions
- Appear more attractive to the opposite sex
- My parents will be proud of my speech
- Improves self-image
- Learn to relax when under pressure
- Improves presentational skills
- Improves my oral interpretation skills
- Makes me a better salesperson
- Makes me more persuasive
- Maybe I'll get a date
- Learn about speaker credibility
- Improves effectiveness in business
- My friends will want to have me teach them skills
- Be more effective in beating traffic tickets
- Get a summer job
- Income will go up in the years to come
- People will like me
- My grades will improve
- My boss will like me
- Makes me more pleasant
- Learn to think more quickly

Buzz!! That's 10 minutes. Yari puts the pencil down and takes a sip of coffee. She generated 27 items or possible uses for learning public speaking. Each item could

serve as a main point that could support her topic—"The uses of public speaking training." Once again, some ideas are better than others, but the goal in brainstorming is quantity, not quality.

The next step, as in the brainstorming process for topic selection, is to examine the list and eliminate the weaker items on the basis of speaker interest, previous knowledge and experience, and possible audience interest in the main points.

After completing the elimination process, Yari finally decides on "Improves presentational skills," "Improves effectiveness in business," and "Improves self-image." She finally arrives at the following tentative outline for his speech:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about three uses of public speaking training.

Main Points:

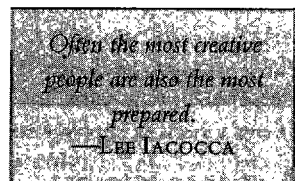
- I. Public speaking improves your presentational skills.
- II. Public speaking helps you become more effective in business.
- III. Public speaking improves your self-image.

The speech topic and main-point structure do not mysteriously appear. Their creation takes some time and effort by you, the speaker. It involves the commitment to sit down by yourself and brainstorm possible topics and main points. It requires making decisions about the topic and main points you are going to be working with as you research, outline, and practice before you present your speech. Some people are not prepared or willing to make this commitment, like the young man in the professor's office at the beginning of this chapter. The choice is always yours.

4.6 Analyzing Your Audience

There was a young man who desired to win the heart of a certain woman in his neighborhood. He wanted to make a good first impression, so he purchased a few gifts to make his introduction all the more impressive. He went to the store and bought a case of onion-flavored chips, his favorite food. He bought every CD ever recorded by Alan Jackson, his favorite singer. And finally, he went to the animal shelter and purchased two young hound dogs, his favorite kind of dog.

The young man was now ready to present these gifts to the woman and ask her for a date. So he grabbed the case of onion-flavored chips, carefully stacked the Alan Jackson CDs on the top of the case, and clutched the leashes of the two barking dogs and wobbled down the street to her house.



As he knocked on the young woman's front door, the dogs began jumping on his chest, spilling the CDs off the case. As he reached for the CDs, the case of chips fell to the ground, and the dogs began biting the case and tearing into the bags of chips. When the young woman came to the door holding her cat, the dogs began snarling at the cat, and the woman screamed, "Get those horrible monsters off my steps! I hate dogs! And what's that horrible onion stench? I'm allergic to onions!"

As the young man tugged on the leashes trying to get the barking dogs off the porch, the woman yelled, "And take these wretched Alan Jackson CDs with you—that man's got no talent!"

"Does this mean you don't want to go out with me?" shouted the young man. The woman slammed the door as hard as she could, while her cat hissed a final warning behind the window.

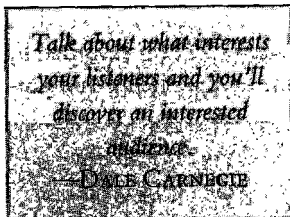
Now, you're probably asking yourself what does this story have to do with public speaking? Or with anything for that matter. Actually, plenty. Like the young man in the story, we often view the world and others through a self-centered perspective—what we think, what we feel, what we like, what we want—rather than putting ourselves in the shoes of others. In our lives, we will connect more effectively and more meaningfully when we take the time to learn about and understand others.

This journey from self to others is a lifelong journey; it is a journey toward maturity. Without this ability and willingness to see the world through the others' eyes, we will be hampered in our attempts to understand others, to connect with others, to establish lasting relationships, to get a date, and even to give a speech.

Audience analysis is the process of trying to understand your audience so that you can improve your communication with them. In other words, you need to learn as much about your audience as you can so you can adapt your speech in ways they will receive, understand, and appreciate. No barking dogs, spilled CDs, crushed chips, or hissing cats for you!

It's important to remember that without the audience, there is no speech, and there is no speaker. The audience is the reason for the speech. Too often, the beginning speaker isn't even conscious of this fundamental truth. He spends an inordinate amount of time and energy worrying about how he will be perceived by the audience, without even once stopping to consider exactly who he will be talking to.

Analyzing your audience is essential to your entire speech process. Without it, your chances of selecting, researching, and presenting an interesting and captivating speech are severely limited. The process of audience analysis should guide your inquiry and decisions regarding your topic selection, the points you pick, the material you gather, and the manner in which you present your content.



Therefore, the analysis should begin immediately as you select your speech topic and main points. There are four areas of audience analysis that you should examine as you select your topic and main points. They are audience interest, knowledge, attitude, and demographics.

Audience Interest

Will the audience be interested in this topic? Ideally, you, as the speaker, will be interested in the topic you are considering. But will your audience be interested? It was once stated that "there are no uninteresting topics, only uninterested listeners." The topic of flower arrangements might be an extremely boring topic to the folks at a BMW Motorcycle convention, but of great interest to a convention of florists. On the other hand, the topic of motorcycle valve adjustment techniques would most

likely have every member of the motorcycle convention hanging on the edge of his or her motorcycle seat, whereas the florists would have long walked out of the auditorium.

It's vital that you consciously shift your attention to your audience and their interests and not stay stuck on what only interests you. One definition of a bore is someone who can talk about things that interest only him. So begin thinking in terms of the other person—the listener in your audience. This emphasis on being sensitive to what others are interested in is helpful in your personal life as well.

Audience Knowledge

The second area you need to examine as you analyze your audience is their knowledge of the topic. After you've determined that your audience will be interested in the specific topic you would like to speak about, you have to determine the audience's knowledge of that topic.

You don't want to speak below their knowledge level of the topic. That could bore and perhaps even insult your audience. If you spoke on the topic of "basic oil painting stokes" to a group of experienced oil painters, you might not only bore them, but you also run the risk of insulting them. On the other hand, you don't want to speak above their knowledge level either. To speak on the topic of "the joys of advanced calculus" to a group of students enrolled in beginning algebra would likely only confuse and frustrate them, since they have no knowledge and experience in calculus.

Audience Attitude

Analyzing the attitude of the audience is the third area of examination. What is the attitude of the audience regarding your topic? Are they in favor? Are they opposed? Or are they neutral in attitude? If they are neutral, how might you present your material to arouse their interests? Or if they are hostile to your topic, how might you neutralize or lessen their hostility? You may even decide to eliminate the topic altogether if their attitude toward it is hostile or nonreceptive.

Audience Demographics

The final area of analysis is audience demographics. Will the audience be male, female, or a mixture of both? What is the average age of the audience? What is the age range? What are the occupational backgrounds of the audience members? What is the educational background? Is their income high, low, or average? Is there a group affiliation? Are the members associated with a particular political, professional, or interest group?

One of the most important demographic factors you need to consider is the cultural backgrounds of your audience. No longer are the audiences of the United States strictly Anglo-European, but are now a mixture of many cultural heritages. African American, Asian American, Mexican American, Native American, and numerous other cultural backgrounds populate the audiences you will be addressing now and in the years to come.

Adopting and developing a spirit of cultural awareness and sensitivity is necessary and desirable if you are to be an effective speaker. It is not the intent of this book to describe the cultural differences of these various groups, but rather to invite you to begin or continue exposing yourself to cultures different from your own.

Here are four ways you can begin your intercultural journey. First, you can interact with students in class who are culturally different from you. Initiate interaction during class activities and in group assignments. You can even invite them for lunch or dessert after class. Making friends is a wonderful way to learn about different cultures. Second, you can enroll in an intercultural communication course. Such a class will provide you with a basic understanding of and appreciation for communication between cultures. You can also take any course that offers a cultural emphasis, such as Asian American literature, African American history, or Native American art. Third, you might even attend special speaking functions or social gatherings hosted by one of the many cultural clubs on campus. And finally, you can read both fiction and nonfiction books on a particular cultural heritage.

By exposing yourself to the literature, experiences, and personalities of people from different cultures, you will increase your awareness and sensitivity to their way of seeing the world and themselves. Ideally, this increased awareness and sensitivity will be reflected in the speech topics you select and the manner in which you develop them.

4.7 Gathering Information about Your Audience

Now that we've discussed the four areas of audience analysis, let's examine four different ways you can gather information about a particular audience. You can learn more about your audience by direct observation and from surveys, interviews, and the contact person.

Direct Observation

The first way you can gather information about your audience is by direct observation—by looking at and listening to them. If you have access to the audience you will be speaking to, you can attend one of their meetings and simply look around and observe. How many people are there? What is their gender makeup? Mostly men? Mostly women? How about the age of the audience? Young? Older? Mixed? And how about the ethnic makeup of the group? One particular ethnic group? Or a mixture of many? Remember to take notes as you observe the group so you can refer to them later as you prepare for your speech. If you're giving the speech to your college class, you enjoy a tremendous advantage because you've had plenty of opportunity to observe the other students in past class meetings. Take advantage of that.

In addition to visual observation, you might keep your ears open, too. By simply listening to what's going on during your visit, you can learn a great deal. What are the discussion topics of their meeting? What are the audience members' responses to the discussion topics? What are the topics of their conversations before and after the meeting? What are the things they talk about and like? What are the things they don't

like? What is the attitude of the group? Did you happen to hear anything that would indicate their level of knowledge concerning your particular topic or their attitude about your topic? You can learn all of these things just by listening. Remember to take notes on any important thoughts and feelings that might be helpful as you prepare your speech.

Surveys

The second way you can gather information about your audience is to survey them. A survey is a collection of questions that the audience can respond to that provides you with valuable information. Keep the survey brief, maybe three to five questions, so the people will be more willing to fill it out. Who wants to answer 30 or 40 questions?

There are three primary types of survey questions. *Closed questions* require brief one- or two-word answers. Questions such as, "Do you know what a hound dog is?" or "Do you like hound dogs?" are closed questions since they can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no" response. *Open questions* such as, "What things do you know about hound dogs?" or "What are the characteristics of a good pet?" require a more developed response. You can see how the responses to open questions can involve much more than just yes or no answers. The third type of survey question is the *categorical question*, which measures responses by degrees. Here are two examples of categorical questions:

"What best describes your knowledge about hound dogs?"

_____ None _____ Little _____ Some _____ Considerable _____ Expert

"What is your attitude toward hound dogs?"

_____ Hate _____ Dislike _____ Indifferent _____ Like _____ Love

Did you notice how the information gathered from categorical questions can be helpful not only in determining if an individual possesses knowledge about your topic or his attitude toward your topic but also in providing the degree of knowledge or attitude. This information can be extremely beneficial in determining speech content, structure of main points, and even whether or not your topic should even be presented.

The secret is to limit your survey questions to five. More than that will discourage respondents from completing your survey. And make certain that you include questions that measure the level of knowledge and the attitude toward your speech topic. These two items are crucial to your research and preparation of any speech. Your audience's level of knowledge will help determine your speech content, and their attitude about your topic will assist you in choosing the most appropriate speech structure for your topic.

Your survey questions should be on one single sheet of paper, and it's best if they complete the surveys anonymously, assuring more honest responses. You need not survey the entire audience, although that would be ideal. Even 25 percent of the

audience would provide valuable information. It's best if the surveys are distributed, completed, and collected as soon as possible to enable you to begin your research once you gather and interpret the data.

Interviews

The third method for gathering information is the interview. If it's possible, arrange to interview a few members of your audience before you begin researching your presentation. Conduct five-minute interviews with two or three of the audience members, using both open and closed questions to collect information about their interest, knowledge, and attitudes toward your topic. Keep the interviews brief since you're trying to get a general idea of the audience you'll be addressing. Open questions are most useful, especially when you ask for the interviewee's perceptions of the group's interest, knowledge, and attitude levels. Keep in mind that the individuals you interview will provide only a sampling of opinions and positions, but they usually will provide a general outlook or direction that can be helpful in your speech construction.

The Contact Person

The final source of audience information is the contact person for the speaking event. Your contact person usually possesses an intimate knowledge of the audience you have been asked to address and can also provide you with a wealth of information about their demographics, interests, knowledge, and attitudes. In addition to answering your questions, the contact person can provide specific information regarding the speaking event itself, such as the speaking occasion, your placement on the agenda, time limits, available equipment, size of audience, your seating location, and a host of other essential bits of information.

Audience analysis is essential to constructing and delivering an effective speech. Without learning about your audience and tailoring your message so that it will be received by them in the most productive fashion, your speaking efforts just might be as successful as the young man with the onion-flavored chips, Alan Jackson CDs, and the two barking hound dogs. Don't let that be your fate. Get to know your audience: what they like, what they know, and how they feel. It will not only make your speaking more successful, but it also might even enhance your relationships with others.

4.8 Speech Preparation Questionnaire

Before you research your speech, you need to research your audience and the speaking occasion to ensure the success of your speech. The first step is to locate a contact person, someone who is in charge of the speaking event, and interview that individual over the phone or in person. If possible, it would also be wise to visit the auditorium or room where you will be speaking to get a feel for the place. The following preparation questionnaire provides some questions you might want to ask the contact person.

SAMPLE SPEECH PREPARATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Speaking Date _____ Time _____

Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Speech Occasion _____

Topic requested _____

Speaking purpose _____ entertain _____ inform _____ persuade _____

Speech time limit _____

Facility Location _____

Directions _____

Size of auditorium/room _____

Podium _____ Microphone _____ Lighting _____

Audience

Name of group _____

Age range of group members _____

Cultural/ethnic considerations _____

Interest in topic _____

Knowledge of topic _____

Opinion of topic _____

Special considerations _____

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Brainstorming about yourself

Make a list of the positive things about yourself following the brainstorming rules, giving yourself 10 minutes for the activity. Remember not to evaluate—quantity is the goal. How did it feel to brainstorm all of these wonderful things about yourself? A little different and strange? We need to do things like this more often. It's good for our self-image.

2. Interviewing for intercultural speech topics

Conduct an informal 10-minute interview with a student in class or an individual at work who is from a different cultural background than yours. Ask him

or her to brainstorm a list of topics that make them mad, glad, or sad. Once the individual has completed the list, invite him to explain any of the items in terms of cultural relevance or interest. Don't judge or evaluate his comments. Simply listen and learn.

3. Personal appreciation list

One of the real challenges for any public speaking student is to come up with speech topics. Even though you know the brainstorming steps, it can be a frustrating process, which can result in you throwing up your hands and admitting that you can't think of even one idea. If this is your experience, try completing this appreciation list. It might help you discover some interesting things about yourself and point to some possible speech topics.

1. Your favorite class is (was) _____.
2. Your favorite book is _____.
3. Your greatest personal achievement is _____.
4. The historical figure you'd most like to share dinner with is _____.
5. Your favorite hobby is _____.
6. The most fascinating or enjoyable place you ever visited is _____.
7. An organization or group you volunteered or worked for is _____.
8. The person, idea, or belief you would die for is _____.
9. The most interesting or fascinating fact you know is _____.
10. If you had six months to live, you would _____.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. Increasing your cultural awareness through reading

Select one magazine, periodical, or newspaper that represents a specific cultural group. Your college library will have a number of such publications. Thumb through one magazine or newspaper and read two articles of interest. What is the perspective or point of view of the articles? Is it different from yours? How is the perspective similar? How did you feel about the articles? Be prepared to share your responses in class.

2. Group discussion: brainstorming speech topics

Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Have each group brainstorm possible speech topics of interest for 10 minutes. All group members are to record the suggestions so that everyone will have a list of possible topics. Remember the rules of brainstorming—no evaluation, quantity not quality, the wilder the better, and combine ideas. Have fun with this activity. Be creative in your thinking!

3. Group discussion: audience analysis

Divide the class into groups of five or six students. The task is to brainstorm five reasons an audience would purchase a new vacuum cleaner from the group. Each group is to brainstorm five different reasons for each of the following four audiences: a fraternity, a group of elementary schoolteachers, a motorcycle club, and a retirement home. Be prepared to discuss your lists with the class.

GATHERING YOUR MATERIAL

WHAT YOU SOW IS WHAT YOU REAP

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 5.1** Identify seven things to look for when gathering your speech material
- 5.2** Explain where to look for speech information
- 5.3** Explain how to record your speech information
- 5.4** Discuss how to help the audience understand your evidence

The icy wind blasted against the thin walls of the tent as sheets of snow fell from the black sky above. Huddled in their warm tent, three Sherpa guides calmly sipped their tea in silence as they listened to the groans of nature outside. In their silence, they contemplated the ascent from the base camp to the first rim of Mt. Everest the next morning. During the hours that followed, not one word would be exchanged among the three men. Each would sit comfortably in the silence. At ease with one another and within themselves, they had nothing to say, and only the sounds of the storm filled the tent as they sat.

The three Americans in the tent beside theirs were busily discussing the departure from the base camp. They talked about the weather conditions, hoping the storm would subside by early morning. They reminisced about past expeditions. They noisily exaggerated their earlier achievements as they argued over which of them was the most skilled climber. The tent was filled with the heated words of their good-natured arguments as the storm raged outside.

When asked by one of the Americans many weeks after the expedition why he didn't always feel the need to talk, one of the Sherpa guides replied, "There is no need to talk if there is nothing to say. I am comfortable with my silence." The American who posed the question couldn't really grasp the import of the Sherpa's answer.

Many years ago, Dionysius warned, "Let your speech be better than silence, or be silent." Much of our American public speaking, in the classroom as well as in the public forum, often resembles the mindless chatter of our televisions. Superficial topics and unimportant issues characterize a great deal of what we bring to our podiums. This tabloid mentality of the mass media permeates our daily conversation.

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We need to occasionally be silent in this noisy culture of ours. We need to quit talking and listen—really listen to others without constantly interrupting. We need to listen with our whole being and not just with our ears. We need to turn off the television. We need to turn off the car stereo and simply hear the hum of the car engine as we drive. We need to turn off the iPod and listen to the rustling of the leaves and the wind in the trees.

We need to experience silence and see what it has to teach us about others and ourselves. All of nature and life is singing to us outside our tents, and we need to

The secret of success is to know something that everyone else doesn't.

—HENRY FORD

take the time to simply listen. Maybe then our speech will reflect a deeper understanding of life and all it has to offer.

Giving a speech involves much more than confidence, delivery practice, and direct eye contact. It requires that what we share with our audience is indeed important, interesting, and ultimately, life enhancing.

This chapter will help you in this area of speaking. We will examine the process of gathering the content material for your speech—what to look for, where to look, and how to record the information.

5.1 What to Look For

As you begin researching your speech topic, you must know what types of supporting material to look for. Although there are a variety of systems that classify supporting material, most speech experts agree on the following seven classifications: definitions, examples, explanations, comparisons, statistics, expert testimony, and visual aids.

Definitions

One of the most helpful and readily accessible forms of supporting material is the simple *definition*. The novice speaker often overlooks the dictionary on her desk as she begins the process of gathering material for her presentation. Yet a definition is not only a powerful tool in clarifying terms for the audience's understanding; it also helps focus the speaker in her research and preparation for the speech itself. A practical use of a definition might be seen in a husband's attempt to convince his wife they should take a one-week vacation to Hawaii: "You know, Janet, *Webster's Dictionary* says a vacation should be 'a period of suspension of regular work or study.' I would define a vacation as eight days and seven nights in Hawaii. How would you like to vacate for a while?"

You should always define the most important term or two for any speech. For example, if you were to give a talk on "honesty in relationships," you would want to define the term *honesty* and include that definition in the introduction or the first main point of the speech. You could simply say, "And what do I mean by *honesty*? Well, *Webster's Dictionary* defines *honesty* as 'the quality or fact of being truthful, sincere, or frank.'" It's always worthwhile to define your terms early in the speech to clarify and limit the scope of your presentation.

One thing you might keep in mind is that a definition should not confuse the audience. Try to avoid technical terms that themselves need defining or definitions that are too lengthy. Select definitions that are brief and easily understood. You don't want to lose your audience before you even get started.

Examples

We use examples every day to support our assertions and positions. If we tell a friend he's usually late for lunch dates, one of the first things he'll most likely say is, "Oh, yeah? When have I ever been late?" In other words, he's asking us to give an example to support our assertion.

One of the most widely used supporting devices is the example. The *example* is a specific instance of a generalization or assertion. *The Random House Dictionary* (we're using a definition already) defines *example* as "One of a number of things, or a part of something, taken to show the character of the whole." Remember the husband attempting to convince his wife to visit Hawaii a few paragraphs ago? Well, he could use an example such as: "Honey, you're going to love Hawaii. It's such a beautiful place to relax. I was there once when I graduated from high school, and I was impressed with the lushness of the vegetation and the warmth and clarity of the water. I was never more relaxed in all my life."

A good rule of thumb is to have at least one example in each of your main points in the speech. The example is a powerful tool the speaker can use to paint a specific picture in the minds of the audience.

Examples can be brief or detailed, factual or hypothetical. If an example is factual and familiar to your audience, you need only refer to it briefly, as your audience is acquainted with the incident. If you're speaking about famous sports achievements, you could briefly refer to the example of "U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps' eight Olympic medals at the 2004 summer games." If the audience is not familiar with an example you are using, you will need to develop it in more detail, with names, dates, and facts. A more detailed example is often called an *illustration*. These illustrations can take the form of anecdotes, personal experiences, stories, or parables.

A *factual example* is an incident that actually took place. Suppose you are speaking about the advantages of buying flood insurance. Your example could be drawn from a family whose flood-damaged home was replaced after Hurricane Katrina in 2009, where the bill was paid by the insurance company.

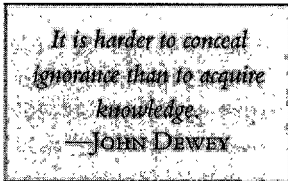
A *hypothetical example*, on the other hand, can also be impressive. You might put the audience in the shoes of an imaginary homeowner whose home was destroyed by a flood but was not covered by flood insurance: "Suppose you own a home and choose not to purchase flood insurance. And suppose your home is destroyed by a flood. How do you pay for the thousands of dollars in damage? How will you cope with the stress of the added financial burden?" A hypothetical example is also called a *hypothetical situation*. It can be extremely effective in getting your audience to consider a situation from a different point of view.

Explanations

An *explanation* is used to make an idea clear and easily seen in the mind's eye of the audience. Once again, the husband could use an explanation when convincing his wife to visit Hawaii: "I'm convinced you'll love Hawaii because you enjoy beautiful scenery, you like to swim in warm water, and whether you admit it or not, you do like to get away from the kids." How could she turn this down? But she's still holding firm to her refusal to go to Hawaii.

Well, let's leave those two for a while and examine the three types of explanations you can use: analysis, exposition, and description.

Analysis is the process of explaining or studying something by examining its parts. You might want to explain to your audience how to bake a cake by breaking the process into three parts: gathering the materials, mixing the ingredients, and, finally, baking the cake.



The purpose of *exposition* is to give your audience information that will increase their knowledge of a topic. Much of any speech is devoted to expounding or explaining so that the audience understands more about the topic. A speech on how to make money selling real estate, grow a garden, or improve communication within a marriage may use exposition.

Description uses the five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing to let the audience know what is being presented. Often, the use of description is the most powerful method of painting a picture for your audience. Suppose you are trying to describe a beach scene to your audience. Instead of simply saying, "It was a beautiful beach," you might describe the scene by saying, "Imagine yourself sitting in the warm sand (touch), and the sound of the waves lapping on the shore (hearing) relaxes you. You smell the salt air (smell), and the blue ocean stretches out as far as you can see (sight)." Which one describes the scene in more detail? The use of description can have a powerful effect on the minds of your audience.

Comparisons

A *comparison* presents qualities or features that are similar. One of the most effective ways to present a new idea is to compare it to something the audience is familiar with. Often, comparisons attempt to show the connection between what the audience knows and what they do not know. The husband in our continuing vacation saga could use a comparison such as: "Hawaii's water is like Florida's, only clearer. The climate of Hawaii is like Southern California's. And the people of Hawaii are as friendly as our own family."

A comparison can be either figurative or literal. *Figurative comparisons* describe similarities between things that are otherwise different. "He's as slow as molasses" and "The heart is like a pump" are examples of figurative comparisons.

A *literal comparison* is an actual comparison. This type of comparison gives your listeners a clear mental picture of what you're talking about. You can tell your audience that the airplane weighed as much as seven pickup trucks or that the tomato was the size of a softball.

Contrast is a way of noting differences between two things. Here, the emphasis is on differences rather than similarities. An example of contrast can be seen when a mother tells her daughter that when she was 20 years old, annual college tuition was \$3,000. But now, an annual tuition bill of \$30,000 is not unusual. Things sure have changed.

Statistics

Many of your listeners will be interested in and impressed by statistics. *Statistics* are numerical facts, such as: one of four Americans will experience some form of cancer

in his or her lifetime; 50 percent of all marriages will end in divorce; and Z-Company stock has doubled in the past five years. Once again, in his attempts to persuade his wife to go to Hawaii, the husband might use a statistic: "One of every three Americans prefers vacationing in Hawaii to any other place in the world."

Wisely used, statistics can have a powerful impact on your audience. Unwisely used, they can bore, confuse, and even deceive the audience. When using statistics, try to keep them simple and easily understood by the average audience member.

There are some important rules to keep in mind when you use statistical information in your speech:

1. **Ensure the accuracy of the statistics you are using.** You should take statistics from reliable sources. Is the magazine, book, journal, newspaper, or website a trusted and proven source? Is the author or the researcher of the statistics credible? Verify these things before using the information.
2. **Your statistics should be recent.** What may have been true just five or ten years ago could be outdated now. Try to have your statistics reflect research that is no more than five years old. The more recent, the better.
3. **Limit your use of statistics.** Once you have researched a topic thoroughly and have collected reams of statistical information about your subject, there is a tendency to want to use all of the data in your speech. If you did, you would run the serious risk of overwhelming your audience. You must realize that your listeners can accept and remember only a few statistics during the course of a speech. It is better to have a few well-placed statistics in your speech than to overload your listeners with an avalanche of numbers. Choose those statistics wisely.
4. **Use your statistics for comparative purposes.** For instance, when discussing the number of lawyers in America, you might tell your audience that in 2008, 1 of every 308 Americans was a lawyer. But the picture changes when you compare that statistic to 1967, when only 1 of every 1,210 Americans was a lawyer. The comparison gets even more interesting if you compare our statistics with those of Japan, where in 2008, only 1 of every 5,330 Japanese citizens was a lawyer.
5. **Round off your statistics.** Present your statistics in a way that will make them easy for your audience to understand. Instead of saying that the average annual wage of a field worker in Chile is \$388.73, round off your statistic so that it will be more easily heard and remembered by the audience. Thus, the average wage of the field worker in Chile becomes \$390 annually. Much easier to hear and remember.
6. **Use visual aids to present your statistics.** For many people, it is difficult to visualize even the simplest statistic as it is being rattled off by the speaker. If the speaker mentions too many statistics and numbers, the audience often will simply tune out. If you have a lot of statistics to present, you might try presenting them in the form of a visual aid—a chart, graph, table, or diagram. We examine this in more detail later in the chapter.

*The harder you work the
luckier you get.*
—GARY PLAYER

Expert Testimony

The testimony of an expert or authority on a particular subject adds credibility to your speech. The most important benefit of *expert testimony* is to show your audience that you are not alone in your thinking—that your ideas and convictions are also held by experts in the field.

You're probably wondering if that wife has decided to visit Hawaii yet. She hasn't. What will it take to convince her? Maybe the husband could present some expert testimony: "Sylvia Bass, our travel agent, told me that of all the places she's vacationed in the world, Hawaii is her favorite." The wife is smiling, but still shaking her head. Well, while she's deciding, let's discuss who to interview if you plan to offer expert testimony in your speech.

You may find it helpful to turn to experts or authorities when researching your speech topics. If your subject is drug abuse, your attention turns to the medical doctor and the drug abuse therapist. If your subject is inflation, your attention turns to the economist. If your subject is engine repair, your attention turns to the auto mechanic. The source of expert testimony changes with each topic.

There are two ways you can support your views with the expert testimony of others. You can quote them word for word, or you can paraphrase what they have said in your own words. You can paraphrase the expert's testimony if the material is longer than a couple of sentences or to simplify the statement in an accurate manner. The shorter the quotation, the greater the impact it will have on your audience.

Because the information you are presenting is not yours, you must *give credit* where credit is due. You must orally document the testimony by telling the audience who said it, where you got the information, and the date of the testimony. It may be stated as simply as, "In the April 2007 issue of *National Geographic*, James McBride states, . . ." or "Dr. Richard Talcott, in the May 2007 issue of *Astronomy*, expresses his belief that . . ."

You can add more credibility to your expert, especially if your authority is not well known to the audience, by presenting some background information before you give his or her testimony. For example, with the first quotation from James McBride, you could preface his remarks by adding that McBride is the "author of numerous books and articles on the subject. . . ." Keep in mind that your documentation and background information on your expert have more impact if you present them *before* you give the testimony.

Visual Aids

The old Chinese saying, "one picture is worth a thousand words," holds true in public speaking as well. The final category of supporting material is *visual aids*. Visual aids can improve your speech by focusing the attention of your listeners, making your ideas easier to understand, and helping your listeners remember what you said.

This is our husband's final attempt to convince his wife to vacation in Hawaii. He will use a series of visual aids: "Honey, just look at these recent photos Sylvia took on her last vacation to Hawaii. Look at the beautiful water. Doesn't the sand look clean? Can you imagine yourself on that beach right now?" She finally says "Yes!" The visual aids did the trick! She's going to Hawaii. But we're not, so we need to examine different visual-aid forms.

The various forms of visual aids include the speaker himself, a chalkboard, objects, models, drawings and sketches, charts, and electronic media. Let's examine each of these forms of visual aids in more detail.

The *speaker himself* can be a very powerful visual aid. Not only do dress and appearance help provide the audience with a strong visual message and a means of evaluating the overall message of the speaker, but body movement, gestures, and facial expressions also can play an important role in helping the audience visualize the speech.

For example, the speaker's body can demonstrate how to move when skiing, dancing, or kicking. His hands and gestures can show how to massage a neck, hold chopsticks, or throw a football. His face can display a range of emotions that can help the audience visualize a scene from a story or anecdote. Don't be afraid to act out or demonstrate portions of your speech that can be appreciated and understood only when they are seen by the audience.

A *chalkboard* or whiteboard is another readily accessible visual aid that may help the audience visualize portions of your speech. Chalkboard use is best for impromptu speeches, when the speaker has no preparation time to construct a prepared drawing or chart. The disadvantages of chalkboard use are many. Often, the speaker will speak to the chalkboard and not the audience. And the speaker's body will partly obscure much of what is being put up on the board. The chalkboard should be used only as a last resort. If you prepare properly for your speech, you will have adequate time to construct a prepared drawing or chart that will prove much more valuable to the audience.

The *object itself* is an excellent visual aid. Showing the audience the actual computer, quilt, vase, or surfboard that is the topic of your speech leaves little to misinterpretation. Often, however, the actual object is impractical to bring to the classroom or auditorium.

A *model* makes a helpful visual aid. A model is a representation that serves as a manageable copy of the object itself. If you were giving a speech on airplanes, A-frame cabins, or the water molecule, a model could serve as an effective visual aid. One thing to remember about models is they don't have to be works of art. One speaker spent more than \$40 having a plastic model of a jet engine constructed, when a balloon would have done just fine. Make sure that your model is large enough for your audience to see and that it gives your audience a rough idea of what you're talking about.

Drawings and sketches are perhaps the easiest of all visual aids to construct. Now, you might be thinking, "I'm no artist," and skip the rest of this paragraph. But hold on for a moment. As in model construction, your drawing or sketch doesn't have to be a work of art. With a few felt-tip pens, a compass, a straight edge, and some patience, you can create a drawing or sketch that can add clarity and dimension to the speech.

Keep your drawings simple. Don't overload the audience with unnecessary details when a stick figure sketch would suffice. Make your drawings, sketches, and lettering large enough so that the people in the back row will be able to see them. After you're done with the first draft of the drawing, move as far away from the drawing as the back row of your audience will be and give it a glance. If the drawing can be seen from there, fine. If not, it's back to the drawing board for a larger version.

The colors used in your drawing or sketch should stand out at a distance. Colors such as black and red on white cardboard are easily seen. Pink and yellow on a white

background cannot be seen. Use a 2 × 3-foot white poster board (the kind you buy at stationery stores for three or four dollars) for drawing your sketches; they stand up better on easels than sheets of regular paper do.

Charts permit the speaker to present a wealth of information in very little space. Word charts, number charts, steps in a process, organizational flowcharts, and maps add important visual dimensions to any speech. Line graphs, pie charts, and bar graphs can also be used to present statistics so that large amounts of data can be seen at one glance.

When constructing a chart, keep it as simple as possible. The lettering and numbering should be large enough to be seen by everyone in your audience. Using letters and numbers so small that only the speaker can see them is a common mistake made by those speakers who forget the chart is for the audience to see, not for the speaker.

*Many public speakers can
talk for hours without any
notes or knowledge.*
—MELVIN BELL

PowerPoint is an excellent software program that can be helpful in designing and constructing much more elaborate visual aids and multimedia presentations to go along with your speeches. This relatively simple-to-use computer-assisted graphics program allows you to design and combine highly professional looking charts, graphs, slides, photographs, and video clips. You might consider enrolling in a computer applications class or workshop that teaches you how to use this program. When you decide to use a computer-generated presentational program such as PowerPoint, keep these suggestions in mind:

1. **Be brief.** Computer-generated presentational programs should be used to enhance your speech, not replace it. Limit your computerized presentation time to no more than 15 percent of your total speaking time. A helpful rule of thumb is to present one slide for every two minutes of speaking time.
2. **Be simple.** Keep your presentations simple. Allow your program's design wizards to help you select the designs, colors, and print type. Don't reinvent the wheel each time you speak.
3. **Be consistent.** Use consistent lettering, transitions, and bullets throughout your presentation. Too much variety can be distracting to the audience.
4. **Be focused.** Use one to three words per bullet. Don't use more than five or six bullets per slide or you'll lose your audience. Limit each slide to one thought or idea. You don't want your audience to spend the entire time reading. This is a speech, not a book.
5. **Be prepared.** Practice your speech with your computerized program. Mark the places in your note cards where you will use your computer slides. Time your practice sessions so that you'll be within the time limits.
6. **Be flexible.** As you practice your presentation, be flexible enough to edit your presentation if it's running too long or too short. Omit certain slides if you think they're unnecessary or don't contribute to the presentation. Change the font, font size, color, or background patterns if they're distracting or unsatisfactory. You're the boss!
7. **Be ready.** Set up any equipment you'll need well before your speaking time. Test the computer program, check the room lighting, and test anything else you might be using for your speech.

8. **Be forewarned.** In the event of computer or electrical failure, be prepared to give your speech without the computerized visual aids. Unlike poster boards, computer programs depend on properly working computer and electrical sources, so be forewarned that electrical disasters occasionally do happen.
9. **Be generous.** Remember that you can print out graphs, tables, lists, outlines, and more from your computerized program for distribution to your audience. It can be helpful for your audience to have some hands-on material to take home and refer to long after your presentation is complete.

Finally, the use of *electronic media*, such as video playback recorders, overhead projectors, and slide projectors, can also be considered when planning the visual-aid portion of your talk. When you consider their use, remember that electronic media may not be appropriate for some speeches. If you have only five minutes to get a group of people to vote in tomorrow's election, electronic media may not be the best approach to convince your audience, because five minutes do not give you adequate time for preparation. On the other hand, if you're trying to convince a group of teenagers to not drink and drive, and you are given adequate preparation time, a video of a fatal car accident scene may have an impact on your audience that words cannot provide.

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of using electronic media, it would be wise for you to practice with the device ahead of time. When you practice your speech, include the use of the machine. There's nothing more embarrassing than trying in front of an audience to figure out how a machine works.

Suggestions for Using Visual Aids. If you decide to use any visual aids in your speech, here are some recommendations you may find helpful:

1. **Devote Time to the Process.** If you decide to use any visual aids in a speech, set aside adequate time to design, construct, and practice using whatever aids you select. Too often, speakers will decide on a visual aid as almost an afterthought the morning of the presentation, not devoting enough time to its design and construction. The results can be embarrassing, both to the speaker and the audience. So if you decide to use visual aids, begin early in the speech process and give your visual aids the time and energy they deserve. Your audience will appreciate your efforts, and so will you.
2. **Make the Visual Aids Large Enough.** When designing and constructing your visual aid, keep your audience in mind—especially those seated at the back of the room or auditorium. If it's possible, visit the room you'll be speaking in and stand at the very back and look at the podium. How large will your visual aid have to be so that it will be seen easily even by people seated way back there? Bring a friend, a newspaper, and a large red marking pen. Have your friend hold up an unfolded newspaper at the podium and see how much of it you can make out from the back of the room. Then have your friend write your name with five-inch letters with the large red marker on one of the newspaper sheets and see if you can make out the name from where you're standing. If you can't, have your friend repeat the process with larger letters until you can see the letters easily. Remember to take your friend out for dessert afterward. It's always good to take care of those who take care of you!

3. **Make the Visual Aids Simple.** Visual aids should clarify or reinforce a point you are trying to make. The goal is for the audience to see and understand your visual aid within 3–5 seconds. Not 30–40 seconds. Just 3–5 seconds. You don't want to overload them with too much visual information. Here, less is more. Decide what it is you really want to emphasize with each visual aid and design it with that in mind. Don't clutter your visual aid with 15 statistics, 20 bullet points, or 25 photographs. Very few people will be motivated enough to look at them, and even fewer will remember anything you showed. Save yourself and your audience time and effort: focus on what is essential, and keep your visual aids simple.
4. **Limit the Number of Visual Aids.** Your visual aids should not become the primary focus of your presentation. A speaker during a three-minute Introduction Speech will quickly be overshadowed by her well-intended, 35 fully animated PowerPoint slides, with all the bells and whistles. Limit your visual aids to no more than 15 percent of your total speaking time. So in a five-minute speech, the time devoted to using visual aids should be about 45–60 seconds. Remember, you are the speaker, so don't get lost behind a mountain of visual aids.
5. **Show Your Visual Aids Only When You're Talking about Them.** Keep your visual aids hidden from the audience until you want to display them. Novice speakers will often set up and display all of their visual aids before they begin their introduction. Although this can be a relief to the speaker, it is usually a distraction to the audience. Who could pay attention to the speaker's introductory remarks when faced with a 3 × 5-foot picture of an injured family in an automobile accident or a list of the 15 most common mistakes made on a first date? Keep your visual aids out of view until you need them. Then you will receive the audience's undivided attention.
6. **Maintain Eye Contact.** The most common mistake made by speakers using visual aids is that they lose eye contact with their audience when focusing on their visual aid. The speaker will read word for word what is displayed on the chart or screen, talk to the visual aid, stare at the object he is speaking about, or simply gaze at his chart as he tries to remember his next point. Above all else, maintain direct eye contact with your audience. Do not look at or talk to your visual aid. Your lack of eye contact can communicate a lack of interest in your audience. (The same can hold true with your romantic interest!) So above all else, keep what's most important in sight.
7. **Don't Pass Your Visual Aids Around.** Even though you'll be tempted to let your audience handle your visual aids, DON'T! Even if they're begging on bended knees. If you do, it will mark the beginning of the end for your presentation. You'll lose their attention. Even the people not holding your pet lizard, the silk floral arrangement, or your collection of 55 square-dancing magazines will still be watching the others fondle your treasures with envy, waiting for their turn to come. No matter how mature or sophisticated your audience appears, they're kids at heart, and you'll lose them once you turn them loose with your visual aids. Maintain control and the audience's attention.
8. **Practice with Your Visual Aids.** Always practice and time your speech using the visual aids you've prepared. This means that your visual aids are already

completed and ready to go before you begin your timed practice sessions. Remember to keep the visual aids out of view until you are ready to discuss them. Speak to your imaginary audience and NOT to your visual aid. This part of your practice is vital to a successful speech. Don't talk to or look at your visual aids during your practice sessions. Keep your eyes on the imaginary audience. Whatever you do in practice is what you'll do during your actual speech, so keep your eyes on the audience. And as you evaluate your practice speech times, determine if you need to trim some of your visual aid segments. Often, visual aids will take longer to use than you might imagine before you practice, so keep track of your times.

9. **Have a Great Life Anyway.** No speaker or speech is perfect. Take this to heart as you use your visual aids in your speech. Things happen to us all. That's life. So don't scream, frown, apologize, or even sigh if something goes wrong with your visual aids when you present the speech to a live audience. Charts fall off easels, the 55 square-dancing magazines may scatter all over the floor, and your PowerPoint file might freeze. When things like that happen, pause, take a breath, and smile. Pick up the chart, gather the magazines, or just gently kick the computer and keep the show going. Audiences will appreciate your calm, gracious response to these minor mishaps. Remember: it's only a speech, and you'll have a great life anyway.

5.2 Where to Look for Speech Information

Now that you have an idea of what to look for when you're researching your speech, we need to spend some time discussing where to look for this information. There are four primary areas to explore: your own experience and knowledge, library resources, electronic resources, and interviewing.

Your Own Experience and Knowledge

Most people rush off to the library when they are faced with the prospect of researching a speech topic. And by doing so, they overlook one of the richest sources of speech information—their own experience and knowledge.

If you sit quietly for a moment or two and scan your prior experience and knowledge of the speech topic you've selected, scenes from the past, bits and pieces of knowledge from old lectures or conversations, and anecdotes from personal experience will run through your mind. Each one potentially provides unique and interesting information for the content of your speech. A woman giving a speech on parenting may remember stories about her parents, movies that depicted the struggles and rewards of parenting, a sitcom that revolved around raising children, and an anecdote or two about raising her own children. This information from past knowledge and experience serves as an original and colorful source of speech information.

The brainstorming technique can be utilized here when surveying your past experience and knowledge. Simply jotting down every related experience and piece

*Just to be is a blessing.
Just to live is holy.*
—ABRAHAM HESCHEL