

The Art of Public Speaking: Tips from the Stage

July 24, 2020, from 12:00 to 1:00pm

Heather Weigler

- Lessons from stand-up; this is a conversation with the audience and think about it that way. Create and relieve emotional tension. Make the audience feel you are authentic.
- Prepare yourself with some pre-planned responses to hecklers, groaners, etc.
- Managing nerves: this is normal (fast pulse, sweating, shakiness) – engage in positive self-talk; if you can convince yourself this is fun people will respond. Listen to pump-up music, practice, and know your material well. Slow down your breath and be in your body. Do power poses (like Wonder Woman) and confess your nerves to the audience.
- Know your material

Mitra Shahri

- To be a public speaker, go into public and speak 😊
- Background is an immigrant having to learn English, was shy in law school and worried about speaking up but had to get over that.
- Start by being authentic and then correcting those mannerisms and quirks that distract.
- The key is communicating to the audience and conveying a message that sticks; *you* don't have to be memorable, but your message should be. Have something worth saying.
- Connect with your audience; that means knowing your audience and using appropriate terms and language; don't use legalese if audience is not lawyers, for example.
- Be knowledgeable about your topic; this helps you flow and go off script as need be.
- Be passionate about your topic; this draws in the audience; remember much of communication is nonverbal; don't let perfectionism stop you from trying.
- Tell a story; our brains remember stories well; package your message in different ways.

Sarah Lowe

- Memorize everything; if you can't, at least memorize your opening line, transitions, and closing. This conveys confidence and knowledge when you're not reading from a script. When trying to memorize, prefers silence and no outside stimuli to help focus.
- Practice with your pets! Don't practice with that person that bugs you; sometimes its better to practice with someone you're not that close to; choose a relevant audience to practice (i.e., someone who matches the characteristics of your audience).
- Make a set list but have a backup story in case you draw a total blank.
- Use stories and narrative to help you memorize your speech; you'll have the outline and gist down cold; use outline and notes more than a full-on write up of speech.
- Nerves: remember that no one will remember what you said anyway, so don't sweat it!
- Slow yourself down way more than you think.
- Film yourself practicing; its painful to watch, but you'll pick up on all those unconscious tics and quirks.

Cierra Brown

- Confidence is the key; fake it 'til you make it. Use super hero pose to help with confidence; make your speaking environment comfortable – make the courtroom feel like your living room 😊
- Know yourself and understand your nervous tics so you can fix them (e.g., inappropriate smirking or laughing when you're nervous).
- Watch the audience for nonverbal cues in response to you. This is another reason to memorize – you cannot watch your audience if you are reading off of notes.
- Learn to become okay with silence; sometimes you need to let something sink in or pivot if you don't get the reaction you wanted.
- Uses jokes in court, jury selection because its authentic to self; results are hit or miss.
- Does not use scripts but prepares and knows topic well; finds that a script serves as a crutch and causes you to miss audience reactions; you can't listen to audience when reading the script. Instead use an outline, bullet points, or key words.
- Nerves: slow yourself down and stay hydrated; if you screw up, just keep going – make a joke about it if you can.

Other tips from the speakers:

- If you become emotional while speaking, lean into it. It helps humanize you. Don't fake this though.
- Take a temperature check of your audience. Take a "poll," meaning ask your audience questions and get them to raise their hands or answer verbally. This will help keep them engaged.