

## Four Elements in Preparing for a Master Presentation

### MESSAGE

What do you want to communicate and to whom?

What do you want your audience to walk away with?

Tell your story. The shortest distance between two people is a compelling story.

Make sure you are clear about the main message you want to communicate. Are there other sub-messages? What knowledge, point of view, understanding or skill do you want your audience to walk away with.

Be precise in your message. You get no points for being fuzzy, unclear or dancing around the topic. Make sure you have a tight focus on your message. You can talk a long time and say nothing, or you can choose your words carefully and convey great meaning.

Words matter. Vocabulary matters.

Connect your message with your audience. Consider their point of view.

What do you want your audience to talk about when they leave?

### SKILL

What technical elements can enhance your communication?

You can develop specific skills to enhance communication.

- Voice: volume, quality
- Use your diaphragm to project your voice. Don't speak from your throat. Use the power of your lungs and diaphragm to project your voice. Speak to the person farthest away from you.
- Delete detractors such as "um," "ah," "like," "you know"...
- Smile
- Make eye contact. Use the windshield wiper technique to look at the entire audience.
- Stand upright, don't lean on the podium or table, don't fidget with distracting things such as jewelry, clothing, etc.
- Don't chew gum.
- Don't wear anything that draws attention away from your message.

Remember "SOFTEN"

S - Smile  
O - Open hands / open arms  
F - Forward lean  
T - Touch / tonality  
E - Eye contact  
N - Nod

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### REHEARSAL practice for a public performance

- Singers rehearse
- Lawyers rehearse their closing argument
- Doctors review procedures and mentally practice before an operation
- Presenters rehearse before every presentation

Rehearsal is a critical component to mastery performance.

Rehearsal is an important process to achieve mastery performance. Make time to rehearse. Make rehearsal a priority.

Define the purpose of rehearsal:

- clarify your **message(s)**
- improve communication **skill(s)**
- improve **performance**: emotional/personal connection with audience
- develop mental memory and muscle memory so you don't have to think about the "basics." You can then focus more on performance.

Rehearse by yourself, with a trusted friend, with a coach. Reflect on your rehearsal. Rehearsal should lead you to improved performance. Identify one thing you want your next rehearsal to help you improve. Feedback should be specific and targeted on improvement of performance. Saying "that was great" or "that was really bad" is not helpful. Give yourself and ask others to give you very specific feedback about message, skill, and performance.

Rehearse in an environment similar to where you will perform if possible. Visualize the space, place yourself in it, plan where you will stand and how you will interact with the space.

Develop your own silent, internal voice that can remind you when you are at a point in the performance when you sometimes have challenges. Your internal voice can tell you to speak up, speak softly, slow down, speed up, say that sentence clearly, maintain focus.

Think of rehearsal as an insurance policy. With enough practice your performance becomes second nature. Then when something unexpected happens, you can draw upon your insurance policy.

### PERFORMANCE a public presentation; the act of staging or representing a character.

Performance is not rehearsal. Performance is you in action, in public. Performance is you being the public persona of your message. Your energy level and excitement is likely to be higher than when you rehearse. Plan for this difference. Monitor yourself to adjust as you need to. Draw upon your rehearsal insurance policy.

Plan how you will convey your message. Tell your story, make it personal, make it comfortable for you, make it real. It should not look fake or "rehearsed" to the point of being impersonal. Make sure technology supports your message and does not interfere.

Know your content and that will go a long way toward a natural performance.

You might create an avatar of yourself, a public persona, that projects the best of who you are at the moment of performance. Step into this role when presenting.