

Myths of Public Speaking and presentation:

By Thomson Chemmanoor

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Once all the myths surrounding public speaking are overcome, one can become a master at it. It is an art necessary for all occupations, as a doctor, teacher, actor, sportsperson and even as a student. One of the foremost myths perceived by people is the impression that they are not public speakers. This is not true. Public speaking is just speaking in public in front of many people. Looking at it in another way, life itself is one big presentation!

There are speakers who speak using their hands. This is actually the right approach to public speaking. Those who do not use hand movements, appear to be stiff to others. The hands, in fact, speak for you! Do not believe that while giving a public speech, you have to look over the heads of the audience. This is not true, as in fact, you have to look directly at key individuals when delivering a speech. The most effective speakers are those who look at a few people, one at a time, as they tend to connect with each other through the eyes. As this then creates a relationship, you find it easier to connect to a single person, than to a large crowd! Do not memorize the whole speech word for word. Instead, it is advisable for you to memorize concepts of the speech so that in case you forget a word, you can then express your point in another way or skip the point. It is best to avoid manuscripts, and to use notes and outlines instead when giving a speech.

Instead of standing in one place while delivering the speech, it is better for you to have some purposeful movement, as this gives a much more dynamic effect to the speech. In fact, if you move across the platform, you increase the energy in the audience. The lectern is to be used only to hold your notes. If you cling on to the lectern and read your manuscript word for word, you risk giving a formal and stiff presentation. When giving a speech, it is better for you to give three major points instead of six and to condense your examples and stories. People are then more likely to remember your speech than if you try to cover all points in your speech by giving a lengthy speech. It is not advisable to start a speech with a joke, as is the myth most people perceive. You should only use irony or humor instead of telling a joke as sometimes, these jokes tend to backfire to you. There is no point in turning off the lights while showing slides, as the audience may only sleep in the process instead of looking at the slides! Instead, use a dimmer with enough light for the audience to see the slides and for you to see their faces as well. The fear of giving a presentation never really goes away. Even the best speakers tend to get nervous while giving speeches. So in fact, a little nervousness is good for you to keep you dynamic. Just learn to harness the nervous energy into giving a positive performance!

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