

# The Characteristics of Effective Public Speaking

- I. **Why Get Good at Public Speaking?** An important ingredient in Leadership: Effective Public Speaking has 2 components, **STYLE** (HOW you speak) and **SUBSTANCE** (WHAT you say.) This outline deals only with **STYLE**. Truly GREAT speeches have BOTH.
- II. **Why Do People "Public Speak"?**  
To inform (Professors, Teachers, anyone conveying knowledge/information), to inspire (Ministers, Priests, Rabbis, etc), to motivate (Football Coaches), to entertain (Stand-up Comics, Actors in a play) and to persuade (Senators advocating a bill) Most speeches are a **combination** of these 5 purposes.
- III. **The Speaker's Psychological Make-up:** Your Myers-Briggs Personality Type comes into play here. Public Speaking is usually easier for "E"s Determine your MBPT at: [www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/Jtypes2.asp](http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/Jtypes2.asp) (First letter = E or I)
- IV. **Preparation** (One hour for each minute of speaking); **Stress** is OK. In general, performance improves as stress goes up - to a maximum. As stress increases beyond the maximum, performance goes down
- V. **Connecting with Audience, especially in your OPENING statement.** Bond with them using self-disclosure (2-way if possible), smiles, humor & audience participation - like taking a poll.
- VI. **Delivery** (With **ENTHUSIASM**, **PASSION** and **KNOWING YOUR SUBJECT COLD**, one can give a pretty good speech even without formal training!) In the list below, **BOLD = most important characteristics**. **NOTE THAT IF YOU OMIT THE VISUAL, YOU'RE ONLY GIVING "HALF" OF A SPEECH!!!**
  - A. **Verbal (Voice Characteristics): VARY the characteristics**, except in 5 & 6
    1. **Volume = appropriate** for room & microphone; loud & soft; varied
    2. **Tone**; from serious to light/playful; varied
    3. **Speed of Delivery; both fast & slow, i.e. have variation**
    4. **Pauses**; both long & short; varied
    5. **Enunciation**: all words are distinct and clear
    6. **NO Verbal distractions** ("er", "and er", "you know", "like", "ummm", etc.)
  - B. **Visual (Non-verbal): amplifies/illustrates the Verbal**
    1. **Eye Contact: maintain 100% + SCAN the audience continuously**
    2. **Attire/Appearance** = Appropriate for occasion
    3. **Facial Expression** = Varied
    4. **Hand gestures**; 4 Types: Subtle and Dramatic, 1-hand & 2-hand
    5. **Body movement, including stepping out from behind the podium or lectern.** Divide the audience into THIRDS. Walk to each third & while addressing them, SCAN the other two thirds.
    6. **NO non-verbal distractions** (fiddling with a pen, brushing back hair, etc.)
  - C. **Delivery Tools** [Sometimes called "Hybrids" (a hybrid/mix of Substance & Style), "Theatrics" or "Spice": these "spice up" a speech] These must be built into the speech when it's written.
    1. **Self disclosure**
    2. **Word choice**
      - a. **Literary impact** (alliteration, meter, rhyme, onomatopoeia, etc.)
      - b. **Appropriateness for audience** (complexity, connotation, social context, etc.)
    3. **Sentence structure** (Subject-Verb = the most powerful: **I came; I saw; I conquered.**)
    4. **Repetition** ("I have a dream")
    5. **Parallel Structure** ("We will pay any price, bear any burden, endure any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe .....")
    6. **Cadence**: speak with rhythm
    7. **Emotions** (Pathos, **Passion, Enthusiasm**, Anger, Sarcasm, Seriousness, etc. Shown with both tone of voice & facial expression.)
    8. **Quotations and/or Poetry**
    9. **Stories/metaphors/analogies/allegories**
    10. **Acting** (including "props" = physical objects, sounds, images; **Grande Entrance**)
    11. **Humor**, when appropriate
    12. **Speak for EXACTLY the time allotted - neither more nor less**
  - D. **Opening and Closing:** Memorize or have them written out.
    1. **The Opening must GRAB the audience's attention.** Consider "**Grand Entrance**": An unusual behavior done WHILE SPEAKING YOUR OPENING LINES - like sitting in the

- back of the room/auditorium, then walk down an aisle loudly speaking your opening lines.
2. The Closing must be memorable. Speak SLOWLY with dramatic pauses.

**(All the above, A, B, C, D, constitute the 26 components of Public Speaking)**

E. Methodology

1. Read presentation (not recommended unless you have a TelePrompter)
2. Memorize
3. Speak from note cards or an overhead projection
4. Extemporaneous
5. Combination of the above

VII. **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**: Public speaking is psycho-motor behavior - like playing tennis or playing the piano. Practice in your clubs & organizations and at GT PUBLIC SPEAKING CLUB. Learning to public speak is like learning to Snow-Ski (explain)! AND: Study the "Great Public Speaking" videos - MLK, JFK, Obama, TED