

Public Speaking Tips From The Top

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Last week I attended the Gove Siebold Speech workshop run by Steve Siebold and Dawn Richards (www.speechworkshop.com). Steve is an ex US pro tennis player (he tells a great story about being beaten by Byorn Borg) and a top 1% fee earner on the world professional speaking circuit. He has a TV show on mental toughness in the US.

Here are a few of the top tips that I noted that have already been really helpful.

1. Make a point and tell a story - The best public speakers tell great personal stories. Look through your life, identify your great stories. If they are your own you will come across as being more authentic. Ensure the story you tell is tied directly to the point you wish to make.

2. Prepare mini speeches - a great speech will be composed of a number of these mini stories. Each story should be a carefully prepared mini speech called a vignette. Base them on an idea or something that has happened to you, involve a problem with some conflict and a resolution to the problem. As you are reminded of great stories that have happened to you log them down in a book. They could prove useful when you are preparing your next big speech.

3. Say it - don't read it - If you want to engage with people, practice delivering your speech as though you are having a conversation with the audience. Not as though you are lecturing, teaching, or a politician reading from a script at a lectern. I cannot stress this enough. Steve worked with me 1 to 1 in front of the group to help me tell a story conversationally rather than in my typical presentation/training style. The positive impact that the story had on the audience shifted from interest to enthralled.

4. Watch your body language - As body language is a key component to communication, jerky movements can distract from a great speech. Keep feet apart and straight by about a foot. Also have the tips of your fingers touching at navel level and keep still if you wish to increase gravitas and impact.

5. Break the sameness - alter pitch, pace, volume and tone as you deliver your speech. This avoids what I once did when a member of the audience in the front row fell sleep. Very distracting.

6. And finally ensure there is some entertainment value - 'big ears'!

Wishing You Success Always

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