

ENHANCING YOUR PRESENTATION  
/COMMUNICATION SKILLS: PART 2:  
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In my last column I spoke about the aspects of being a leader. Obviously, you cannot lead without having a vision and sharing that vision with others. "But I have great difficulty speaking to groups," you might say. I am often asked what tricks I utilize when speaking to a large group of people. When answering that question, I usually quote Baba Ram Dass who said: "If you learn 'tricks,' you'll be a caterpillar that flies, not a butterfly." There are, however, things you can do to enhance your effectiveness as a presenter.

When I do a talk, or conduct a seminar or workshop, I never feel that I am there to give a speech. That would be boring for me, and probably for the group as well. I am simply there to share something special, something I am excited about. My audience is very special to me. These people have invested their time, energy and money to see and hear me. Wow! I appreciate that. I see them as people with their personal concerns, problems, fears, joys, etc. I think about what might have brought them to this place at this point in time. I look at my audience, not above their heads. I sense the energy of the group and feel myself sympathetically vibrating with it. I smile. I make eye contact. I get enthused. I get excited.

"That is all great, George, but! don't know whether I would be comfortable doing all that," you might think. If you are uncomfortable with who you are, you may have to do some processing, because it will definitely make others uncomfortable also. I am sure you have heard the statement, "Who you are speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying." If that is you, then you have to get out of your own way. If, however, you feel that you are an honest person, with a genuine love and concern for people, you have the makings of a great speaker. The thing that most confuses people trying to learn to be good communicators is the idea that somehow they have to act differently when giving talks. This is why they usually fall apart. The best communicators do not change their styles of delivery from one situation to another. They are the same whether they are doing a radio or television interview, giving a speech, or having an intimate conversation. This is the big secret. Sounds simple, right? Yet there are numerous workshops that teach presenters how to be exactly that-"themselves". It is not a question of changing yourself because of environmental changes; rather, it is to become totally comfortable with yourself wherever you are.

"What about my nervousness?" you might ask. Cicero said, over 2,000 years ago, that any public speaking of real merit was characterized by nervousness. Nervousness is very powerful and can give your speech the passion and momentum that it needs. What else can you do to enhance your presentation skills? Below is an outline of the strategies that I utilized paralleling the Dorothy Leeds Model-"9 Keys To Breaking The Fear Barrier."

- (1) Admit your fear; understand its sources. Did you know that there was a time when I, George Bien, would actually she uncontrollably whenever I had to give a presentation. This continued well into graduate school. It was very easy for me to admit my fear. I was literally terrified!
- (2) Recognize that fear is normal for public speakers. When I spoke with other speakers, most told me that they had some fear. Some said that they actually trembled before a speech. "Finally," I thought, "there is some hope for me."
- (3) Tap the energy that fear produces. Whenever I stood up to speak in front of a group, there was so much fear-oriented energy in me that when I finally transformed it into excitement, I had to actually keep my enthusiasm under control. I became afraid of being too wild.
- (4) Visualize yourself as a powerful presenter. I would make believe that I was Zig Zigler, Denis Waitley, Brian Tracy, Martin Luther King, Terry Cole-Whittaker, John Kennedy, Cicero, Mark Anthony, etc., etc., etc. I would imagine their heads on my body, my head on their bodies, then integrate the two and create the new me!
- (5) See the audience as your ally; focus on its needs. I would visualize the audience enthusiastically accepting me and wanting more. In my mind's eye, I would see them cheering me on, excited about what I was saying, and the way I was saying it.
- (6) Speak about something you care about. I chose topics that excited me. I then learned that I could get excited about many topics. Simply getting excited about life got me more excited about people and communication. This, in turn, added more intuitive creativity to my presentations. The more excited I got, the more creative I seemed to be. After all, all creativity is born of excitement. Everybody who ever lived was conceived because some man got excited! Sounds funny, yes? But when you think about it, you realize that it is true.
- (7) Combine preparation with practice. People will tell you to tape yourself while you are practicing your speech. Any time that I did that and listened to it back, I did not want to give the speech. It simply sounded terrible! It lacked the energy of the group. [Nervousness is very powerful and can give your speech the passion and momentum that it needs.] You will find that you will sound much better during the actual presentation. William Tiller of Stanford University says that the intensity of the coherent group-energy field (which means a group of people on the same wavelength with the same intentions at the same time) is not the sum of the number of group members, but the square of the number of people in the group. Hence, the power of a group of 500 people whose energies were coherent would have the numerical value not of 500, but 250,000! Now that is powerful!
- (8) Devise tricks to psych out your fear. I used rapid "Huna Breathing" to transform fear into energy. Other people, however, utilized more creative methods. Winston Churchill, for example, liked to imagine that each member of the audience was naked. FranklinRoosevelt pretended that they all had holes in their socks. Carol Burnett imagines audience members sitting on commodes.

- (9) Think positively about yourself. I listened regularly to audio tapes containing positive affirmations. These affirmations eventually became part of my self-talk. We are communicating with our eyes, faces, attitudes, etc., and we influence each other's breathing, skin temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, body motions, sweat glands, eye blinks, gestures, etc. This is the essence of true sympathetic human vibration.

[About George Bien: Often called "Hypnotism's Trainer of Trainers," Dr. George Bien, PhD, is considered America's leading authority on subconscious reprogramming. Dr. Bien has hypnotized over 100,000 people and has trained over 2500 professional hypnotherapists worldwide.]