

For Permanent & Positive Change

# The Exchange

**FEATURED TOPIC: PRESENTATIONS**

## Featured Service

Therese Padgett

### Y.E.S. – You, the Effective Speaker!

Yes! The coaches at TLC strongly believe in the power of positive self-affirmation. The title of this course, "Y.E.S. – You, the Effective Speaker!" is evidence of this belief.

The mind can hold only one dominant thought at a time. When you keep telling yourself that you are an effective speaker and you then combine that with positive visualizations of yourself making a great presentation, you are more than halfway there.

"If" is the second most debilitating word in the English language because it sets one up for doubt. If you say you "can't" – the number one most debilitating word – do a thing, you have already defeated all your efforts and training and good intentions. Therefore, TLC teaches you to blast out all negative words from your vocabulary and to replace them with positive, present tense action words.

Armed with a positive, can-do self-image, you are now ready to tackle the rest of the Y.E.S. program. Have you identified the main point you are to convey to your audience? Have you considered your audience, their communication style(s), and how you will need to adapt your own style to meet their needs? How will you engage or draw them into in your topic? Do you know how to "claim" your space at the podium and how to walk across the stage with confidence? What should you do (and not do) with your hands? Your voice is an instrument: how do you best make use of it? How many lines of text should be on each slide of your Power Point presentation and what happens when you "talk" to the slides instead of to your audience? How do you summarize your speech so that your main point remains dominant in the thoughts of your

listeners? Questions terrorize you! How do you handle Q&A, especially with the press?

We are confident you want the answers to these and other questions. Please give TLC a call today and we will discuss with you the training options that will make you and your key people more effective speakers. Call us at 1-888-BECAUSE (because you always communicate)!

Between now and the time you call, please enjoy the following articles. They give you just a few of the answers and none of the practice that you will receive from our course, "Y.E.S. - You the Effective Speaker!" ❖

## You've Got Two Minutes

Regardless of the amount of time you are given to present, the first and last minute can determine your success. While it is possible to recover from a poor opening, it is much easier to get off on the right foot and have your audience warm to you immediately by starting with energy.

At TLC, we teach four ways to begin and end a speech. The easiest way is to open with an open question that pulls your audience into your topic. Some audience members are required to be present, and while they are there physically, there is no guarantee they are ready to listen to what you have to say. By asking a question that begins with "what" or "how" their brains will automatically begin to answer it, thus getting them prepared to listen to you. We call these rhetorical questions because the audience is not expected to raise their hands or answer out loud. The sole purpose is to get them involved. This type of opener is helpful when you do not have much time to prepare.

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### Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Healthy Humor.

### Looking Back

You might also be interested in our November 2006 edition: [Gender Differences](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

*"All the great speakers were bad speakers at first."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## What Our Clients Are Saying

"The speaker coaching sessions you've conducted at TVA have been well received. Feedback from the participants has been positive as they recognize your expertise as both a speaker and a coach"

Katie Bell Manager, Community Relations Tennessee Valley Authority

## For Permanent & Positive Change

### What Do I Do With My Hands?

You may be able to converse every day without thinking about your arms and hands, yet when you get up to give a presentation, they feel like lead. This can be a distraction to the speaker and the distraction sends a message to the audience that the speaker is nervous. So, what do you do with your hands?

The answer depends upon what you do with them when you are standing and having a conversation with a co-worker. Extroverts tend to use more gestures than introverts. If you use hand gestures when talking one-on-one to someone, then you will look and feel comfortable using gestures when you are speaking in front of an audience.

Generally speaking (no pun intended), gestures that are slow and smooth add to the message, while fast and jerky movements of the arms and hands tend to distract from the spoken words. If you are standing behind a podium, be sure to get your gestures high enough to be seen or you can look like you are twitching. Usually getting them chest high works well.

Strive to avoid using the same gesture repeatedly because that can become annoying to the audience who is watching you. Release your gestures with grace instead of dropping your arm like a rock falling off a cliff.

Now, if you regularly talk to people in conversation without using gestures, then obviously you will feel more comfortable not using gestures while you give a presentation. You can relieve the stiff-arm look by holding onto a large marker. They are large enough to keep your hand from balling into a fist and give a reason to have your arm bent at the elbow. Just make sure that you do not play with the marker as you speak. Other small objects can be good to hold instead of a marker.

To achieve that calm look, you can also place one hand partially in a pocket. To keep your posture calm yet not slouchy, keep your thumb out of the pocket just allowing your fingers inside or just place the thumb in the pocket and allow your fingers to remain outside. This will keep your hand from slipping to the bottom of your pocket and noisily playing with items such as coins, keys, business cards, etc.

Your guide to hand and arm use while speaking depends upon what you do when you are not in the limelight. When you are the center of attention, just be yourself – your best self. ❖

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Another opener that is effective is to use a quote. A quote needs to have some balance, such as, "Success comes in cans. Failure comes in 'cannots.'" The balance here is success/failure and can/cannot. In other words, a quote is not just something someone said because famous people can be quoted as saying rather worthless phrases. When quoting, the source can be important. Sometimes who said it gives meaning to what was said. Often, the best quotes are anonymous and, if that is the case, use it if you like it. Also, the same quote may be attributed to several people. Consider the dates. Abraham Lincoln probably said it before Oprah did.

Quotes can be found in reference books, calendars, magazines and on the web. Start a collection of favorite quotes and separate them by general topic. This can be a timesaving and motivating resource for you when you begin to plan your speech.

A startling statistic is a third way to begin or end a speech. The key word here is "startling." At TLC, our definition of startling statistic is one that will cause the eye-brows to raise. When you use a statistic, the source is sometimes more important than the fact. Quoting to engineers a fact that you located in People Magazine may not impress them. To add value to your statistic, be sure to state a reliable source.

A fourth way to begin a speech with interest is to tell a short story. Make sure it takes no more than 10% of your time frame, is relevant to your topic, and you have a segway to your key message. At TLC, we generally encourage people to stay away from telling jokes. First, what is funny to you may offend someone in the audience. Second, if no one finds humor in the joke, everyone, including the speaker, feels the pain.

The next time you plan a presentation, begin and end with interest. Making those two minutes count can get you off to a great start and leave the audience with a favorable impression. ❖

#### Helpful Hints

- ✓ When using slides as visuals, use a maximum of 6 lines
- ✓ Begin your presentation with a question, quote, or short story
- ✓ Practice by visualizing your speech in your mind

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*"A good speech is like a pencil: it has to have a point."*

Unknown

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*"Winners believe in their worth in advance of their performance."*

Denis Waitley

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*"Never do anything you wouldn't be willing to explain on television."*

Arjay Miller

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## For Permanent & Positive Change

### Shooting From The Hip

Most of us realize that the idiom, Shoot from the hip, means to speak or act without thinking of the consequences. Ever wonder where it came from?

We have the old West to thank for this saying. During gunfights, it was quicker to shoot your revolver from the side of your hip as soon as you pulled it from the holster than it was to raise it higher and shoot as in proper European duels. If you had accuracy, this added speed meant you lived to see another day.

In more recent times this idiom has come to represent the concept of talking or acting recklessly or aggressively without prior planning. Some speakers revert to shooting from the hip only to find hostile questions being fired from the audience. Since preparation on any subject dramatically reduces the fear of speaking, we at TLC highly recommend that you refrain from shooting from the hip when speaking. This is especially true if the media is present because they can capture your "bullet" in print or video for the entire world to see. ❖

### Ask The Experts

Dear TLC,

I have been asked to give a presentation for our Board of Directors. I know the subject matter, but these people intimidate me and I am afraid I will harm my career chances by speaking. I would like some pointers.

Terrified

Dear Terrified,

The visibility that speaking to the Board avails can far out-weigh your fear of limiting your career. Most people are fearful of the questions they will receive. Here are two approaches. First, you can send a cover page with the highlights followed by details about ten days before the presentation. Request questions that the board members have and those questions and answers become the presentation. Or, make your presentation from the highlights and anticipate questions they might ask making sure you have the data to answer. If you are ever asked a question that you do not know the answer to, state calmly that you do not have that information at your finger tips, yet you will get it to them by (give them a time or date).

### Are There Any Questions?

For many speakers, these can be the four hardest words to speak. The fear of someone asking you a question that you may not have an answer for is quite common. Here are three possible solutions:

**1. Align the Answer.** If someone asks you the wrong question, give the right answer to what would have been the right question. For instance, if you are asked, "Why did your company terminate jobs only in 'Tennessee?'" you can reply, "We instituted a reduction in force during the first quarter involving employees in Tennessee, Arizona, and Ohio." In this case, the right question could have been "What areas are being affected by the layoffs?"

**2. Headline.** If the question is off-topic, this is a quick way to get back on track. For instance, if you are asked, "When are you going to lower rates?" and your presentation is about a new service that has nothing to do with a rate change, you can answer, "Our goal today is to explain the benefits of the new Doppler Service including ease of access and speed of service. I do not have information on the topic you requested. If you will give me your contact information after we are done, I will give it to the appropriate person. What other question are there regarding any aspect of this new service?"

**3. Re-create the question.** This is a way to erase inappropriate and potentially harmful questions by creating another question to replace it and then answer your own question. For instance, "Why is the Board trying to sneak this through?" is a question you do not want to answer. Instead, replace it by saying, "I'm hearing you ask, what is the process that the Board uses to change board policy? According to our bylaws and policies & procedures, we use Robert's Rules of Order and call for a vote of all Directors."

Knowing that you have some options can take away the sting of answering questions. And remember, if you do not know the answer, tell them you will get an answer to them or that you will refer them to the appropriate responsible person. You do not have to know everything. ❖

#### Remember To

- ✓ Adapt your presentation to your audience
- ✓ Move with purpose to release energy
- ✓ Use your conversational rhythm to sound interesting

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*"Can't never could!"*

Unknown

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*"Courage is resistance to fear – not absence of fear."*

Mark Twain

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*"If you want to be miserable think about yourself, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you and what people think of you."*

Charles Kingsley

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*"The best way to learn to speak is to speak."*

Walter Robinson

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## For Permanent & Positive Change

### Chief Officer's Opinion

Beverly Inman-Ebel

#### The Mirror or The Window

So you have a big presentation coming up. Good for you! Before you begin the process of preparing what you will say, think about this.

Imagine that you are standing in front of a window. What do you see? You may notice the beauty of nature or the complexities of human life. You may see people rushing along the streets as pedestrians and in their vehicles. If you are in a large office complex and you have an interior window, you may notice your co-workers busy at their various tasks.

Now, imagine that you are standing in front of a mirror. What do you see? You notice your appearance. Perhaps your hair is messed up or you have a smudge or new wrinkle on your face. Maybe you like what you see; maybe you do not.

The only difference between a window and a mirror is that the mirror is a piece of glass coated with silver that blocks the view outward and reflects images. Speakers can focus on the window or the mirror. When you focus on the window, your thoughts and attention center around what is going on outside you. You think about what the audience needs and how they may react to what you say.

When you focus on the mirror, you may get hung-up on some imperfection that only you can see. You may give too many details because you think they are important, forgetting that the audience may not care for that depth of information. You may get so absorbed with yourself that you begin to mumble because you know what you are saying and who else needs to hear?

Before you begin to prepare your next speech, chip away that hard metallic lining that prevents you from seeing what really matters in any speech – the people you are talking to. Study the people who will hear you speak. Figure out how to reach them, help them.

I often hear people talk about how nervous they get from having 100 eyes looking at them while they talk. Turn the mirror into the window. Look at the 100 eyes while you talk. It's not about you; it's all about them.

Take a risk and volunteer to speak. Look out your mental window and create the vision based upon the need. Prepare. Practice. Deliver. Live your dreams!

[bie@talklisten.com](mailto:bie@talklisten.com) ❖

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*"Be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams ~ the more they are condensed the deeper they burn."*

Southey

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*"Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly affects the health. You have never known a man who died from over work, but many who died from doubt."*

Charles W. Mayo

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*"Productive achievement is a consequence and an expression of healthy self-esteem, not its cause."*

Nathaniel Branden

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TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by e-mail [tlc@talklisten.com](mailto:tlc@talklisten.com) or phone 1-888-232-2873. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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#### Contact Info

TLC, Talk Listen  
Communicate, LLC  
842 S. Germantown Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37412  
Phone: 423-622-8255  
Fax: 423-624-4365  
1-888-BECAUSE  
Email: [tlc@talklisten.com](mailto:tlc@talklisten.com)  
[www.talklisten.com](http://www.talklisten.com)