

HOW TO SPEAK CONFIDENTLY
AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

A photograph of two women sitting in red armchairs, facing each other in conversation. The woman on the left is wearing a yellow jacket and holding a notebook and pen. The woman on the right is wearing a blue denim jacket and gesturing with her hands. The background is a wall with a pink and white wavy pattern. A large, semi-transparent orange circle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text 'SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE' in large, bold, yellow capital letters.

**SPEAK WITH
CONFIDENCE**

SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE HOW TO SPEAK CONFIDENTLY AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY VIDEO COURSE



Need more support? Faith Wood is a professional speaker and trainer with over two decades of experience. Reach out: info@imind.ca

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INTRODUCTION



In this guide you will learn the benefits of being a confident speaker. You will also learn the traits of confident speakers that you can identify within yourself and work on to improve if necessary. Planning what you are going to say will help you to be a lot more confident with your speaking and we will explain this in detail.

You will also learn how you can become a good conversationalist. This will definitely help you to be more confident with your speaking. Using the right body language when you are speaking is essential and you will discover exactly what you need to do in this guide.

The way that you use your voice will also help to give you more confidence when you are speaking. We provide you with a number of proven methods for this. Confident speakers use pauses in the most effective way and you will learn how to do this. Finally, we will share proven tips and advice to improve your public speaking.

Everything that you need to know about speaking with confidence is in this powerful guide. So please read every word and apply what you learn. The steps outlined in the guide require practice, patience and persistence.

THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE

CHAPTER 1



In this powerful guide you will learn what you need to do to speak with confidence. You may already know that when it comes to people's biggest fears, public speaking is at the top of a lot of lists. This is not just a guide about public speaking, although we will dedicate a chapter to it because it is so important.

There have been people say that they would rather die than perform public speaking. Of course, the reality is that they would do everything in their power to drag themselves up to a podium and speak in public rather than face death. But it goes to show that there is real fear out there when it comes to speaking confidently.

In order to make the transition from where you are now with your speaking to being a really confident speaker, you will need to put in some consistent effort over time. Any life change like this requires high levels of motivation – so we will begin our guide by revealing the benefits of confident speaking.

Once you read and understand these benefits you should be inspired to take the necessary action to improve your speaking. We will provide you with proven methods to speak with more confidence in this guide so you really do have everything that you need here.

Improve your Personal and Professional Reputation

As we have already said, this guide is not just about how to speak confidently in public. When you are an effective speaker and communicator, things will change for the better in both your personal and professional life.

We are gregarious by nature and it is natural for us to want to communicate with other people. The pandemic restrictions have really challenged us but our desire to speak with others has been satisfied with technology such as video conferencing.

People that are effective communicators tend to have a much more satisfying personal life than those that are not good speakers. They are able to attract the people that they want in their life and communicate well with them. In addition to this, they are effective when communicating with children and other people in society.

On a professional front, effective speakers usually do a lot better than those that are not good at speaking. People that are prepared to stand up and have their say in the working environment command respect from others and are often in positions of responsibility.

Being a Part of the Decision-Making Process

We are talking about your professional life here. Are you someone that will freely give your opinion at work? Those that do are often called upon when important decisions need to be made. Managers want to know what their employees really think and tend to invite those that they know will speak up to be involved in important decision making.

If you are running your own business then there are several reasons why you need to be a good speaker. When you meet prospects for your business you need to be able to explain coherently why it is a good idea for them to do business with you. This applies to face-to-face meetings as well as meetings using video conferencing.

Be Concise with your Communications

There is a world of difference between a confident speaker and someone that just likes the sound of their own voice and will talk for hours if you let them. Time is critical in both your personal and professional life and the ability to get your message across in the most concise way is a great skill to have.

Nobody wants to listen to someone that just talks too much and repeats themselves over and over. Some people do this without even realizing they are doing it. As a concise speaker you will show respect to the person or people that you are speaking too. Their time is valuable and so is yours.

Make others Trust you and Respect you

People will always gravitate to confident speakers. Whether this is in a personal setting or a professional one, you will usually see a crowd gather around a confident speaker to hear what they have to say. It is easy for confident speakers to gain trust and respect from others.

Trust is essential in all aspects of life. You are not going to attract your dream partner if there is no trust. Other people will not want to do business with you if they don't trust you. The words that come out of your mouth are so critical for garnering trust and respect from others.

You will have the Ability to Deal with Anyone

There are quite a few difficult people in the world. If you are not confident in your speaking ability then these individuals can be a real challenge for you to deal with. You may even be afraid to converse with them about anything.

You never know when you are going to have to deal with a difficult person. This could happen at your work or in your personal life. When you are able to speak to these people with confidence then you will not fear any situation.

Be Perceived as Authentic

It is always good to have the desire to come across as genuine and sincere with other people. This will be a lot easier for you to do when you are a confident speaker. People will look up to you as they feel that you are very authentic. In the business world this is particularly important as people will always choose authentic people over those that they do not perceive to be genuine.

Be Perceived as an Expert

When you can speak confidently about any subject then you will immediately increase your chances of others perceiving that you are an expert. People always look to experts for advice and guidance and this is a very good place for you to be.

In the business world. It is a well-known fact that customers will always choose an expert over someone that they do not rate as highly. What you say will definitely have an impact on the perception others have about your expert status.

Make the Right First Impressions

You are no doubt aware how important it is to make a good first impression when you meet someone new. If you are trying to attract a partner in your life then the things that you say first to them are so important. It will set the tone for your future relationship.

The same goes for meeting new people in your business life. Whether these are potential or existing customers or others that you need to work with, making a great first impression is essential for success. When you become a confident speaker, you will be able to make a good first impression every time.

Persuade many People at once

By mastering the art of public speaking, whether you are attending a live event where you are scheduled to speak or are presenting a webinar or using technology to do this, you will be able to provide a persuasive message to all those that are in attendance.

We will cover public speaking in much more detail later on. For now, just believe us when we tell you that developing your speaking ability so that you have the confidence to talk in front of others is something that will definitely be to your advantage.

In the next chapter we will discuss the traits of confident speakers...



THE TRAITS OF CONFIDENT SPEAKERS

CHAPTER 2

If you want to be successful with anything in life then one of the best ways to do this is to model what other successful people are doing. This provides you with an effective “shortcut” that you can use and often proves to be a lot quicker than starting from scratch.

We agree with this approach and so we have thoroughly researched the traits that successful speakers have so that you can learn from this and develop the same traits. Take a look at the different traits below and ask yourself honestly how far away you are from truly possessing each trait. You can then work to develop yourself to have the same traits as well.

1. Confidence

OK this is obvious. But you need to know that confidence is everything when you are speaking. When you are confident delivering the words that you speak people will be attracted to you and want to hear what you have got to say.

A confident speaker will be happy to add their input at any time. If they want to approach someone in their personal life then they will be able to easily do this. This is not something that they fear as so many others do. Because they have a high degree of confidence in their speaking ability, it is easy for them to strike up a conversation with anyone.

In their work or business confident people will definitely shine. They will be one of the first to speak up in meetings and will relish the prospect of talking to prospects and even large audiences. Confident speakers know how to engage people no matter how many of them they are talking to.

When you have confidence in your words then you will always be able to be “you” no matter what the occasion. There will be no need to try and pretend to be someone you are not. There is no need for you to be a good actor to get your point across.

Developing confidence is not a difficult thing to do but it does require consistent effort. You can turn on confidence immediately using anchor techniques that we will discuss in this guide. If you need to increase your confidence then there are so many proven methods that you can use to good effect.

2. Telling Stories

It doesn't matter if you are in a conversation with one person or addressing many, the ability to use a storytelling approach with your speaking will always work well for you. Nothing engages people more than a good story. We all love stories and are drawn to people that can tell them well.

If you do not know how to tell stories when you speak then you need to learn how to do this. The trick here is to relate the story to the context of the message that you want to get across. It is boring to just recite a lot of facts and figures at people.

When you are a good storyteller, you will be able to share your experiences with people in an engaging way. If you do not have an experience of your own to share in the form of a story then you can use a story from someone else. There are millions of interesting stories from the past that you can use.

The good thing about telling stories is that they help to retain the interest of the person or the people that are listening to you. We are all story lovers instinctively and you need to tap into this and use it to your advantage.

3. Speak with Passion

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people that have a very monotone delivery when they speak. If you believe that you have this problem then there is definitely something that you can do about it. The most successful speakers always add passion to their delivery.

If you are not passionate about your subject matter then how can you expect others to be? A confident speaker can add the right amount of passion to anything that they are talking about. When another person or an entire audience feels and sees your passion for something, they will be far more attentive to you.

4. Being Concise

We already touched on this in the first chapter. Whenever you are speaking it is critical that you stay on point and make things as succinct as possible. You need to know that people do not have very long attention spans. Modern day life has made this situation worse and you will only have a few seconds to hook people and to make them want to listen to what you have to say.

It is not just about getting their attention from the start either. You need to be able to hold their attention for the entire time that you are speaking. People really appreciate it if you get to the point quickly. This is showing respect for their time.

If you are providing a presentation to a number of people either online or offline then you need to get your point across in the most succinct way. Practice your delivery and if it seems too long then try breaking it up into smaller chunks. You can make all of these different segments interesting in their own way so that you keep the engagement levels high.

5. Reading the Signs

It is critical that you can read the signs to see if your speaking is going down well or not. This will come with practice if you stick at it. When you are talking to one person then pay special attention to their body language. You need to be able to tell if they are listening to you and make adjustments if you feel that they are not.

When you are addressing an audience of people, the signs of engagement are not so easy to spot. To make your presentation more engaging you can ask your audience to interact with you. Ask them questions and request that they provide you with a response. The worst thing to see is people leaving during your presentation so do everything you can to keep them engaged.

In the next chapter we will discuss how planning your speaking will help you...

HOW PLANNING YOUR SPEAKING WILL HELP YOU

CHAPTER 3



Whether you are going out on a first date or addressing an audience of thousands, planning will always help you to speak with more confidence. Most people try to “wing” the conversations that they have with others. If you are already a confident speaker then this is fine. But if you find it difficult to strike up a conversation with people then you need to make some changes.

In all situations it will help you to plan what you are going to say if this is possible. Now we don’t want you to get carried away here – of course, it is not necessary, nor practical, to plan every conversation that you have with everyone. We wouldn’t expect you to do that. But you can identify situations where what you say is very important and plan for these in advance.

In this chapter we will discuss some of the proven planning techniques that you can use to sharpen up your speech. We will also examine the benefits of planning what you are going to say where this is practical. You can certainly plan for a date and for a public speaking presentation that you are giving for example.

Planning provides you with Options

It is good to have options no matter what kind of speaking that you are planning to do. The worst thing possible on a date is for the conversation to dry up. Nothing kills the atmosphere than long periods of silence. Does this mean that you have to talk incessantly throughout the entire date? No, your aim is to get the other person to talk.

When you are meeting someone for the first time in your personal life (or the second time if it is a date), then you need to believe that there are a million things that you could talk about.

There are some things that you want to avoid such as the weather as this demonstrates that you are not a confident speaker.

OK, so you don't know anything about the other person or what their interests are. In this case you need options. Think about the subjects that you could discuss for example:

- Family
- Travel
- Sports
- Clothes and fashion
- Music
- Food
- Current events

There are just so many. With a little planning you can provide yourself with a number of options with social conversation and this will ensure that you never run out of things to talk about. It is not difficult for you to do this and the more that you practice the better you will become at it. After a while it will become automatic for you.

If you are speaking to a group or some kind of audience then you need to plan what you are going to say. This doesn't mean using a script that you must stick to. It is better to create an outline for what you are going to say and then rehearse this a number of times.

Planning helps your Words Flow

One of the major advantages of planning what you are going to say is that you should find that your words flow a lot more naturally when you are speaking. If you know what you are going to talk about and in what order then this will come across in the words that you speak.

Planning will increase your confidence. You have rehearsed everything and you are ready to go. It is better to deliver your speech in a storytelling fashion than read directly from a script. With practice you will find that your words become a lot smoother and you sound totally natural which is what you want.

Planning helps you Focus

Some people are introverts and do not have enough to say. Others are extroverts and have too much to say. If you fall into either of these camps then planning will help you to be focused with your speaking and stay on topic.

Not having enough to say can be very awkward and saying too much can really put people off. You want people to have the perception that you do not talk too much and that when you do speak it is always worth listening to.

Having a Backup Plan

When you plan what you are going to say then you can also create a plan “B”. Too many people get caught out with this. They have a plan for what they want to say and pin all of their hopes on this. But what if something goes wrong or something unexpected happens?

Life is full of surprises and no matter how good a planner you are there will usually be occasions where you cannot follow your plan. How about when your computer crashes in the middle of giving a presentation to people? You do not have those slides to rely on so what do you do? Go to plan “B” of course!

Planning can help you Anticipate

When you are planning what you are going to say you can think about the types of questions that you will be asked. This applies to a date as much as it does to giving a presentation to a group. With the date situation you want to get them talking and feeling comfortable. But what questions are they likely to ask you?

If you are giving a presentation then it is always good to be prepared for the questions that your audience will ask. It is impossible to anticipate everything but you can cover off the questions that are the most likely to come up. When you are prepared to answer these questions, you will do so in a confident manner because you rehearsed this.

Eliminate Errors with your Speaking

Practice recording what you are going to say and then play this back to spot any errors. Alternatively, you can ask a trusted friend or colleague to watch you and then point out any weaknesses. Look out for a lot of “ahs” and “umms” in a presentation delivery for example.

Be critical of yourself here. If you think that you are rambling on too much about a subject then look at ways to make this more concise. Are you providing opportunities for the audience to interact with you? Getting all of these errors out of the way before the actual event will make you feel a lot more confident.

In the next chapter we will discuss how you can improve your conversation skills...

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CONVERSATION SKILLS

CHAPTER 4

Being a good conversationalist will certainly help you to be more confident with your speaking. The ability to hold an interesting conversation with an individual or group of people is something that you should always aim for. This has the potential to open a lot of doors for you in life.

In this chapter, we have some proven ways that you can engage in great conversation that are actually backed by science. When you follow these tips, you will be able to start a conversation and make sure that it goes smoothly until the end.

Know your Intention

OK not all conversations need to have a specific intention but a lot of them do. In the last chapter we discussed the importance of planning what you are going to say and this is a continuation of that concept.

With different social events you normally have time to plan. The more that you can determine your intention, know your audience and conduct your research the better. Ask yourself a number of questions such as:

- Who do I want to talk to?
- Who will be in attendance?
- What is my intention with my conversation?

Your aim here is to come up with a purpose for the conversation(s) that you will have. By having a purpose, you will feel a lot more confident about everything. You will have direction for your conversation and this will also help the people that you are conversing like and trust you more.

Use a Friendly Approach

It is important that you get your body language right when you are approaching someone to have a conversation. The first impression that you create is critical and this does not always come from the words that you speak. We will take a more in depth look at body language in the next chapter.

For now, we can offer you the following tips:

- When you are introducing yourself make eye contact with the other person
- Make sure that your hands are visible at all times
- Smiling at the person that you want to talk to always works
- Ensure that your posture is relaxed with your shoulders down

Use Conversation Starters

Do you have a “go to” conversation starter? The most difficult thing with conversation is starting one. So, it will make you a lot more confident about your speaking if you have some conversation starters already prepared and rehearsed.

A conversation starter that has stood the test of time is “hi, how are you?” This is very easy to say and it works every time. Look for some context with your conversation starter and keep it neutral. If the person has a plate of food ask them how good it is for example.

There are plenty of conversation openers available online. We recommend that you look for these and then create a list of them that you feel comfortable with and use them in different situations. After a bit of practice, you will never have a problem with starting a conversation ever again.

Use the Bookmarking Technique

This is a fairly advanced technique for great conversations that works well. What you do here is to add emphasis to certain parts of the conversation which enables you to create deeper connections. A bookmark is a verbal marker that allows you to follow up in the future.

For example, you can say to the other person that you should meet up at a later date for some reason. Another good example is to remember something humorous that happened when you were talking and refer to this later on.

When you are in conversation with a person there is a possibility that you can find a common interest that you can refer to. You bookmark this common interest and use it later. Use other means to keep in touch with the person such as social media.

Get People Excited

A good conversationalist will look for ways to keep a conversation going. One of the best ways to do this is to find something that will excite the person that you are talking to. You achieve this by asking the right questions during your conversation.

Here you are creating a spark which will result in the person that you are talking to experiencing a dopamine rush. For example, you can ask them about any plans they are excited about such as personal goals, a planned trip and so on.

Tell Stories

We have already mentioned storytelling a couple of times in this guide and the reason is that people love stories. When you tell a good story you will literally draw in the people that are listening to you.

If you don't have a lot of interesting stories of your own then tell stories about others. There are plenty of good stories online that you can research and keep in your back pocket for that next conversation. Practice telling stories by recording yourself and critically analyzing your performance.

Encourage a Response

If you share something with another person then you want them to share something with you. With some people, you will need to encourage them to do this. A great way to encourage a response when you have finished sharing is to ask the question "how about you?"

In this situation the other person has no choice but to share something back with you. It helps to keep the conversation flowing and it works well all of the time. With a good conversation, the talking should be on a 50/50 basis. This is not an exact science of course, but you can tell when someone is dominating a conversation.

Exit making an Impression

All good things must come to an end and this applies to conversations too. You should always endeavor to make a good impression when you exit from a conversation. This will ensure that the person will have a lasting memory of you and your conversation.

Commit to catching up with the person again. Tell them that it was great talking to them and that you hope you can do it again very soon. If you laughed together then tell them how much you enjoyed that.

In the next chapter we will discuss the importance of body language for confident speaking...

THE IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE FOR CONFIDENT SPEAKING

CHAPTER 5

When you speak with confidence your body language supports this. This includes the posture that you adopt, the expressions on your face, your eye contact with the person or people you are speaking to and more.

Body language is very important not only when you are speaking in public, but when you are speaking one on one with someone. If you do not adopt the right body language then it doesn't matter how good your words are people will pay attention to you and your message will be lost on them.

Although most of the body language tips in this chapter apply to a public speaking environment, you can certainly use a number of them with your one-on-one interactions. Be prepared to work on your body language so that your confident speaking will have the maximum impact.

Make good Eye Contact

This applies to any speaking situation. When you make proper eye contact with people, they are far more likely to respond well to you. You will establish trust a lot quicker and the person or people you are speaking to will respect you more.

If someone is telling a lie they tend to avoid eye contact with the person that they are lying to. The opposite is true when you make good eye contact and deliver your sincere message. With good eye contact you will be able to pick up on feedback from others a lot more easily too.

When you look directly at the people you are speaking to it will be easy for you to detect their mood. Do they seem bored with what you are telling them or attentive and interested? You can check to see if a person looks angry or sad for example.

In a one-on-one situation it is best to make eye contact for a few seconds (9 is recommended by scientists) and then break this for a few seconds. If you do not take a break then it can seem like you are staring at the person which is not good.

If you are addressing an audience then focus on one person at a time. Here it is recommended that you make eye contact for around 4 seconds and then move on to another person to make eye contact with.

Use Correct Hand Gestures

Some people question why hand gestures are so important with confident speaking. The main reason is that if you use the correct hand gestures you can really enhance the message that you are delivering. Using hand gestures helps to amplify the story that you are telling. They also help you to come across as more authentic and believable.

You need to be careful not to overdo it with hand gestures. If you are animated all of the time with your hands then this can result in people paying more attention to the movement of your hands than what you are saying.

The most powerful hand gestures are those that help to bring out the emotion in what you are saying. For example, if you clasp your hands together then this can mean that you are pleading. Raising your hands either side of your head suggests despair.

It is a good idea to mix it up and not just use hand gestures. You can change your facial expression to emphasize a particular point. If you are standing in front of an audience then you could move your legs or even your whole body.

Use Facial Expressions

People will always check the facial expression of another person so that they can understand their emotions and their intent. You can use this knowledge to your advantage when you are speaking. Whether you are speaking with one person or several, the expressions that you have on your face will help them to really interpret what you are saying.

For example, a smile at the right time can go a long way. We recommend that you practice your facial expressions by recording yourself and then playing this back to see how well you did. You do not want to use the wrong facial expressions when you are speaking as this could convey the completely wrong meaning.

Eradicate Bad Mannerisms

A number of people have some bad mannerisms that are not conducive to confident speaking. These are habits that they have strengthened over time and if used when you are speaking, they can have a very negative impact on others.

Something that a lot of people do is to fiddle with their hair or their clothes when they are speaking to an individual or an audience. Another classic example is standing, or even sitting, with your hands in your pockets. Another bad mannerism is to keep saying words like “like”, “so” and “um” when you are speaking.

Sometimes people use these bad mannerisms without even knowing that they are doing it. They are so ingrained that they naturally do them. Record yourself speaking and check for any bad mannerisms. It is going to take persistence and continuous effort to break these habits but you must do this.

In the next chapter we will discuss how the inflection you use with your voice helps you to speak in a confident way...

USING VOICE INFLECTION TO SPEAK CONFIDENTLY

CHAPTER 6

One of the most powerful and simple ways that you can speak with greater confidence is to use the right inflections with your voice. People tend to underestimate the power of voice inflection. When you get this right, you will be perceived as a more confident speaker and be able to get your message across and command the attention of those listening to you.

The good news is that you do not have to completely change your voice to use the right inflections. You only need to make small changes to how you speak normally to sound a lot more confident.

It is really worth you paying special attention to this chapter because slightly changing the inflection in your voice can not only have a major impact on a listener, it can also make you feel significantly more confident about how you are speaking.

Speak from your Diaphragm

People that are able to speak from their diaphragm sound the most confident of all. In order to do this, you first need to learn to breathe from your diaphragm. This is a calm type of breathing which will take a bit of practice but shouldn't take you long to master.

It is simply a matter of making your stomach rise when you inhale and letting it fall when you exhale. After a while of breathing from your diaphragm, you should naturally transition to speaking from your diaphragm as well.

Add a Smile to your Speaking

If you smile when you speak then you will naturally change the inflection in your voice. You do not have to go over the top here and have a permanent smile on your face when you are speaking. Not only is this difficult to do, it also smacks of insincerity.

The trick here is to smile a little bit when you are speaking. You want to achieve the effect of the other person or people “hearing you smiling”. Smiling a little when you speak will make you sound a lot friendlier to others and they will be at ease with you. This is a great way to boost your confidence when speaking.

Relax your Throat with a Jaw Massage

If you want to relax your throat then the best way to do this is to massage your jaw. The benefit to your speaking is that it makes your voice a lot easier to hear. Just open your mouth a little bit so that you part your teeth and then massage your outer jaw with your fingers.

You need to practice this jaw massaging and it may even hurt a little when you start doing it. By persevering with this you will help your mouth to open wider than normal. When your mouth is open wider your voice will sound a lot more confident.

Enunciate your Words

Too many people tend to mumble when they are speaking. If you want to sound more confident and really get your point across, you need to enunciate the words that you speak. Mumbling can make people believe that you are insecure about your speaking which you don’t want.

A trick that is very effective in helping you enunciate your words is to place a wine cork between your teeth. Now read something out loud with the cork in place. Take the cork out and then read the same words again. You should notice a significant difference in your articulation. After this you can practice speaking in this same manner.

Make your Breathing Slower

If you are about to address a room full of people then it is fairly natural to be nervous about this especially when you are getting started with your confident speaking. You will tend to breathe faster in this situation.

In order to speak with a more confident voice inflection you need to slow down your breathing. When you are able to slow your breathing at will, your voice will follow suit and you will speak with greater confidence. Speaking too fast will give your listener the impression that you are anxious and this is not good for establishing trust.

Identify your Natural Pitch

It is easier for you to identify the natural pitch of your voice than you may think. With your mouth closed, drop your lower jaw as if you are about to yawn but keep your lips closed together. Now make an “mmmm” hum noise starting with a high pitch and make your way down to a low pitch. Feel the vibrations on your lips with your fingers.

The point where the vibrations of your lips feel the strongest is your natural pitch. Once you have identified this then we recommend that you use this pitch when you start to talk. This is your natural voice and it will make you feel confident and comfortable.

Lower your Voice a Little

There have been studies which showed that people responded better to those that had a deeper voice. With this in mind, you can try lowering your voice when you are speaking to an individual or a group to see how they respond.

You will need to practice lowering your voice and a good way to do this is to talk from your throat. Stick out your tongue and say “ahh” as you may have been asked to do by a doctor before. There will be a constriction at the back of your throat because it is opening.

Mimic the Voice Tones of others

If you know anything about neuro linguistic programming (NLP) then you will probably have heard about the power of mirroring and matching. To be more confident with your speech you can mimic the voice of the person you are talking to in a subtle way.

For example, if they are speaking in a slow and calm way then you can do the same. If they speed up their speech then you can do this too. This will help you to tune in to the energy level of the person that you are speaking with. We tend to like and respect people that are similar to ourselves so this will help you build rapport.

In the next chapter we will discuss the power of the pause...

THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

CHAPTER 7

Confident speakers understand the power of the pause. This is particularly effective when you are speaking to an audience but it can be used in one-on-one situations as well. When you understand how powerful using pauses with your speaking can be and you master this, it is a great way to increase your confidence when speaking.

Pausing boosts your Confidence

There are several benefits to using pauses when you are speaking to others. When you take a short pause, it helps you to feel a lot more comfortable about the words that you are speaking and the manner in which you are delivering them. A lot of people overlook how taking a pause allows you time to breathe.

Do you know someone who never seems to take a breath when they are speaking? There are plenty of these people around. They seem to be in such a hurry to get all of their words out. Each time that they speak it all seems rushed and this can be very irritating for those that are listening. People can come to the opinion that you are forcing your words out which is not good.

It is essential that in all of your speaking situations that you feel confident and relaxed. Taking pauses for breath will help you to do this. It will help you to feel more in control of the message that you are delivering and the way that you are speaking.

Taking regular pauses gives you a feeling of authority and this will be noticed by your listeners. You will show them that you are comfortable with silence and that you have the control to ensure that everything you are saying is coming out as you want it to.

Taking Pauses gives you Control over your Body

When you give yourself a small amount of time to breathe when you are speaking, it enables you to calm any nerves that you may have and be in control of your emotions. Sometimes when you are speaking to others you may begin to feel tense and anxious. People will notice this in your voice and taking a pause is an effective way to regain control of your body and calm things down.

If you feel a tenseness in your body then this will bother you and cause you to focus on this rather than your speaking. In order to improve this, we recommend that you record yourself speaking and taking pauses to regain control of your body. In time, you will know exactly when you need to take a short pause and use this to put yourself in the most confident state.

Add Energy to your Speech with a Pause

By taking a pause at the right time you are able to take a deep breath in and out which will help to re-energize your body. This in turn will tune your body and mind and commit you to focus more on the words that you are speaking and add more energy to your message.

Think about this. If you make a powerful statement when you are speaking, taking a pause just after this will enable those that are listening to you to fully understand your message and receive the full impact of it.

In fact, a well-positioned pause after you have delivered an important element of your message can actually be more exciting than the words themselves. Think of this as providing parts of your message with a lot more energy that will help to emphasize what you are saying.

Pauses help to Increase Engagement

Confident speakers engage really well with their audience. This can be a single person or thousands of people. A successful speaker knows how to connect with their audience and also to identify any signs of disengagement. Rambling on without pausing is a surefire way to cause disengagement.

If you notice that there is disengagement starting with your listeners then taking a pause can be a very effective way to getting things back on track. It is a subtle tactic that works well every time. Your audience will perceive you as a confident speaker when you do this. You will demonstrate that you are aware that they are losing interest and want to get them back.

Even the shortest of pauses provides you with time to think. In this short period of time, you can rethink your speaking strategy and try a different approach which will enable you to reconnect with your audience.

Give your Audience Time to Reflect

By deliberately pausing and adding silence to your speaking, your audience will have time to process what you have just said and feel the impact of your message. If you do not pause very often and just keep delivering your message then they will receive a lot of information but they will not have sufficient time to reflect on what you have told them.

The use of pauses when you are speaking gives your audience the chance to reflect on the previous words that you delivered. You want to give them the opportunity to fully take in what you have said and also to remain engaged with you as a speaker.

Another benefit of using pauses is that it signals to an audience that there is a new idea or thought coming their way. You need to allow a little time for your audience to prepare themselves for new thoughts and taking pauses at the right time is a very effective way to do this.

You Think much Faster than you Talk

One of the reasons that pauses work so well is that we are able to think a lot faster than we can speak. There has been a lot of research into speech and the common belief is that we speak at around 150 words every minute. Additional research has found that we are able to think as much as four times faster than this.

It is easy to lose the concept of time when you are speaking. Sometimes it will feel that you are taking a very long time to get your words out. The reality is different as this is likely to be only a few seconds for those that are listening.

Eliminate the use of Filler Words with Pauses

You may have read that professional speakers use filler words in their speech when they want to take a step back and work out what they are saying and how it is being received. The trouble with this is that speakers tend to use the same filler words and after a while this becomes obvious to the people that are listening.

Filler words are not as effective as taking a pause for a few seconds. When you take pauses at the right time you will sound like you are in control and confident in what you are saying. If you try to use filler words then your audience might find these distracting and quickly come to the opinion that you do not know what you are going to say next.

Practice your Pausing

It may seem simple just to take a pause at certain times when you are speaking but there is a lot more to it than that. It is not easy to get pausing right so you will need to practice by recording yourself speaking and pausing.

You need to be critical when you are reviewing your recordings. Did you pause at the right time? Will the pauses that you used allow the audience time to reflect on what you have said? Were you able to rethink the way that you were delivering your speech and make adjustments if these were necessary?

Control your Fear with Pauses

Even the most seasoned of confident speakers can be nervous when they have to address a group of people. This can even happen when you are going to talk to one person. By taking a pause it will enable you to align your thoughts and prepare yourself for a confident delivery.

It is healthy for you to take a pause when you are speaking. Although you will breathe automatically when you are speaking, this is usually not the best way to breathe. When you are nervous your breathing will be shallow and taking a pause will allow you to stabilize your breathing and correct this.

Pause after you ask Questions

A great way to increase your engagement with your audience is to ask them questions. When you do this, it also provides you with an excellent opportunity for a pause. You want your audience to have sufficient time to digest the question that you asked them and this also allows you time to breathe so that you are ready to provide the answers.

Of course, you do not want too long of a pause when you ask a question. We recommend that you wait for up to 3 seconds (which can seem like a very long time). You will appear a lot more confident when you do this and really come across as genuine and authoritative.

Being able to create silence and be comfortable with it will help to increase your confidence as a speaker. It will show that you are in control and that you know what you are doing.

In the next chapter we will discuss great ways to improve your public speaking skills...

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

CHAPTER 8



No guide on confident speaking would be complete without discussing public speaking. As we said at the start of this guide, some people say that they would rather die than perform public speaking. A lot of people have a fear of public speaking but it is not as difficult as you might think.

In this chapter we will share some proven ways that you can improve your public speaking and become very confident doing it. Successful public speaking is a great skill to have. The tips you will see here apply whether you are addressing an audience in person or leading a webinar on a video conferencing platform.

Practice to reduce Nervousness

It is natural to be nervous about public speaking. Even the most confident speakers sometimes get the butterflies in their stomach before they perform public speaking. Being nervous before a public speaking event is not a sign that you are not a confident speaker.

Being a bit nervous is actually a good thing as it will provide you with an adrenaline rush that will make you perform even better. The adrenaline will help you to stay alert which is essential when you are leading a presentation.

To minimize your nervousness and anxiety it is always best to plan and prepare. We have already discussed this in the guide and it is so important. You need to be comfortable with what you are presenting and you can either practice in front of someone that will be honest with you, or record yourself and critically analyze your performance.

Know your Audience

To deliver the most confident public speaking you need to know as much about your audience as possible. Of course, this applies to a business situation and not to making a speech in public at a family event. We would always assume that you know your family!

So, you need to learn as much about your audience as you can prior to the public speaking event. You want to be able to connect with them and give them what they want. Engaging your audience is the ultimate aim with public speaking. Using the words that will keep your audience focused on your message is what it is all about.

When you know your audience, you will be much better placed to anticipate and answer any questions that you receive in a confident way. In addition to this, you can provide the content that your audience wants.

Be a Persuasive Speaker

When you have the chance to speak in public then you should definitely take it. For business situations you want to provide a persuasive speech that inspires and motivates your audience. It is best to begin with the outcome that you want to achieve in mind.

What do you want your audience to do after they have heard your speech? Do you want them to purchase something? Or maybe you are giving a motivational speech that will inspire employees of a company? Tailor your presentation around your desired outcome.

If you are going to persuade your audience then you must engage well with them. Most people have better things to do than attend a speaking event for an hour or sit online for longer watching a webinar. When you are front and center live or on a camera, be sure to smile, make good eye contact and move in the most appropriate way.

Allow Interaction and look for Feedback

The best public speakers engage their audience with ease. They interact with them regularly and ensure that they have their chance to give their opinion. You do not want to deliver a monotone speech where the audience just has to sit and listen for hours. People will leave in droves.

One of the best ways to include your audience in your presentation is to ask them questions at certain points. For example, you can present a section of your presentation and then ask the audience some questions to make sure that they have understood what you have said. This will not only provide proof of learning but also help to engage more.

If you are at a live event or are able to see your audience online, be sure to focus on them. You want to be able to gauge their reactions when you ask questions and also throughout your presentation. Flexibility is important here. Change your approach if things are not working out as you want them to.

Be Yourself

It is amazing how some people completely change when they are speaking in public. They seem to use a false character and try to be something that they are not. This is difficult to maintain for the duration of a presentation and something that is entirely unnecessary.

We recommend that you be yourself when you are public speaking and just let your personality shine through. When you are able to be yourself you will build trust with your audience faster and your credibility will improve. Forget about acting when you are speaking in public. Be a real person and things will work out well for you.

Tell Stories and be Humorous

Yes, we have mentioned telling stories as a good thing to do several times in this guide. This is because it works so well. Your public speaking will be so much better if you can add stories to your presentation. People love stories and there are always ways that you can incorporate them. If you do not have your own stories then use other people's as long as they are relevant.

Nobody is expecting you to be a stand-up comedian when you are public speaking but it is always a good idea to inject some humor into your presentation. We are not talking about telling jokes here. Just use funny anecdotes to break things up a little. If you can get your audience to smile at your humor then this is a good thing.

Use an Outline rather than a Script

Have you ever attended a presentation either online or offline where the presenter was reading from a script? It can be one of the worst experiences you can imagine. When a speaker reads directly from a script, they are going to deliver their speech in a boring way. You need to avoid this at all costs.

It is much better to create an outline for your presentation which you can refer to. You can highlight points that you want to make to ensure that you do not forget anything important. A good outline will keep you on track as well. As usual, your presentation will be a lot better the more that you practice it.

If you are reading from a script, you are not making eye contact with your audience or looking directly into the camera if it is a webinar for example. This is not good. Of course, you can glance at your outline and notes occasionally to ensure that you cover everything.

Start and End in a Great Way

You want your public speaking events to be as memorable for your audience as possible. The best way to do this is to make the start and the end of your presentation really strong. When you get off to the right start you will have the full attention of your audience. Never start with "hello, today I am going to discuss X with you". This is as dull as it gets.

What are the best ways to start? Well, there are several things you can do here. Ask a question like “do you want to know the easiest way to...?” or quote a statistic that will shock them. You can also open with a motivational quotation or an anecdote that will be of interest to your audience.

When it comes to finishing your presentation, you want to pay even more attention to this. Your audience are more likely to remember the last thing that you said than anything else. We recommend that you summarize what you have discussed in your presentation and then conclude with a strong statement. Fear is good. Tell them that if they don’t take action they will lose out.

Get your Visuals right

You will need to use some visuals such as PowerPoint slides in your presentation to get your points across to your audience. Some presenters go overboard with this and provide far too many slides. If you have too many visuals then this can take the focus away from you as a presenter.

When you are deciding on your visuals always remember that they are there to enhance what you are saying. You can also use visuals to clarify some of the points that you are making. One of the mistakes that a lot of presenters make is to reveal everything on their slides.

If you let your audience see all of the content on your slides, then they will read this instead of focusing on you. They will then be bored as you read through the points as they already know them. Only reveal points on your slides after you have talked about them.

Move in the Right Way

The final tip that we have for you with public speaking is to move around. In the chapter on non-verbal communication, we talked about the importance of hand gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and more. Practice emphasizing points that you make with the appropriate hand gestures and facial expressions. Record yourself doing this and avoid going over the top.

In the final chapter we will discuss the confident speaking best practices that you need to follow...

CONFIDENT SPEAKING BEST PRACTICES

CHAPTER 9



Here are the best practices that we highly recommend you follow to become a more confident speaker. By following these best practices, you will give yourself the maximum chance of success with your speaking and be able to command respect and the attention from your audience that you deserve. This will require consistent effort on your part.

1. Understand the Benefits of Speaking with Confidence

There are several benefits to learning how to speak with confidence and it is essential that you are aware of these so that you will be motivated each day to follow through. One of the major reasons is that you will enhance your personal and professional reputation.

Confident speakers are often asked to be part of a decision-making process within a business. Speaking confidently will also ensure that your communications are concise and you will be able to gain trust and respect easily. You will also be perceived as an expert and genuine and you can use your confident speaking to persuade others.

2. Develop the Traits of Confident Speakers

All confident speakers have a number of traits that you can develop so that you can emulate their success. The number one trait is confidence and there are lots of ways that you can improve your self-confidence. Confident speakers are good storytellers and they also speak with passion in their voice.

As a confident speaker you will want to be concise with your messages. A great skill to develop is reading the signs of your audience. It doesn't matter if this is a single person or a large audience. You need to know if your speaking is having the desired effect and if not make adjustments to it.

3. Plan your Speaking

It will certainly help you to be more confident with your speaking when you prepare. Planning what you are going to say provides you with options. It also helps to make your words flow better. You can eliminate errors when you plan and you can also anticipate reactions from your audience. Preparing what you are going to say will also provide focus.

4. Improve your Conversation Skills

Being a good conversationalist will help you to speak more confidently. Determine the intention of your conversations and use a friendly approach. Have some conversation starters in your back pocket and use the bookmarking technique. Tell stories and get people excited with your words. Encourage responses from people and always exit conversations with a lasting impression.

5. Use the Right Body Language

Using the right body language will make you a more confident speaker. Be sure to make good eye contact and use the appropriate hand gestures. Practice using the right facial expressions and identify any bad mannerisms that you have and eradicate these.

6. Use Voice Inflection for Confident Speech

Using the right voice inflection aids confident speaking. Learn to speak from your diaphragm and smile a little when you are speaking. Perform a jaw massage to relax your throat practice enunciating your words. Slow down your breathing and identify your natural voice pitch. Lower your voice for good effect and learn to mimic the voice tones of others.

7. Use the Power of the Pause

There are a number of good reasons why you should pause when you are speaking. It will boost your confidence and help you to control your body. You can add energy when you pause and it will also help to increase engagement. Give your audience time to reflect with a pause. Think when you pause and use it to eliminate the use of filler words.

8. Improve your Public Speaking Skills

There is no need to fear public speaking. It is natural to be nervous and this will release adrenaline. Know your audience to reduce nervousness and practice being a persuasive speaker. Be yourself and allow your audience to interact. Use an outline rather than reading a script and be sure to have a powerful start and end to your presentation.

CONCLUSION



Now that you know what you have to do to become a more confident speaker it is time for you to take action. Don't just read this guide and then let it gather digital dust on your hard drive. This is your life, so follow the steps and apply what you have learned.

Most people never become confident speakers because they go about it in the wrong way and let their fears get the better of them. They try to figure it all out by themselves and then give up very quickly. You know how exactly what you need to do now and the steps that you need to take.

We hope that you enjoyed reading "Speak with Confidence" and that you found this guide informative and inspiring. Start right now by comparing the traits of confident speakers to your own and identifying any gaps. We wish you every success with your confident speaking journey.