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- Calming Your Nerves and Gaining Confidence
- Planning and Organizing Your Presentations
- Strengthening Your Presence and Charisma
- Using Your Voice to Influence Others
- Making Your Messages Vivid and Memorable
- Selling Your Product, Service, or Ideas
- Engaging, Motivating, and Inspiring Your Listeners
- Dealing With Skeptical Audiences and Resistance
- Handling Q & A with Ease and Power
- Speaking Like a Pro to Any Audience

“Reading *How to Give a Speech* was an eye-opening experience. Gary Genard is an outstanding coach and he’s written a terrific how-to guide to public speaking. Get this book, and recommend it to your colleagues.”

—JODI WHALEN, Marketing Director, Food Network

“These techniques work! From speeches to meetings to conference calls, *How to Give a Speech* is a book that has helped improve my communication skills and reduced my frustrations.”

—XIAOWEN HEURTEUX, VP/Senior Financial Analyst, Citigroup

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—JOHN BALDONI
author of *Great Motivation Secrets of Great Leaders* and
Great Communication Secrets of Great Leaders

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—PETER T. SMITH
Region Vice President, The Hertz Corporation

“Although I’ve been a professional speaker for 13 years, I learned valuable lessons from *How to Give a Speech*. Whether you’re a rookie or a veteran, Gary Genard’s perceptive, accessible book provides all the tools you need to present with confidence.”

—ROBERT SPECTOR
International speaker and author,
The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence

“Reading *How to Give a Speech* was an eye-opening experience. I didn’t realize there were so many small changes I could make when presenting to sound more appealing... starting with how I said my own name and title! Gary Genard is an outstanding coach and he’s written a terrific how-to guide to public speaking. Get this book, and recommend it to your colleagues.”

—JODI WHALEN
Marketing Director, Food Network

“*How to Give a Speech* has helped me to develop a robust toolbox of speaking techniques. My communication effectiveness has improved significantly as a result of using these methods. I feel even better about my improved self-confidence and focus in knowing how to utilize these tools for any situation requiring effective communication.”

—DAVID BEAN

Vice President of Finance, Vertex Pharmaceuticals

“*How to Give a Speech* offers a friendly, engaging roadmap to public speaking. It’s an insightful read. Dr. Genard discusses the importance of being honest in your remarks, while maintaining a conversational tone with your audience. *How to Give a Speech* shares invaluable techniques on how to be a successful orator.”

—LISA MURKOWSKI

U.S. Senator (AK)

“These techniques work! As a communicator to global audiences, I have found Dr. Genard’s tips extremely helpful in achieving clarity and power, and getting my critical messages out. His techniques for relaxation, visualization, and audience analysis have become common practice for me. From speeches to meetings to conference calls, *How to Give a Speech* is a book that has helped improve my communication skills and reduced my frustrations.”

—XIAOWEN HEURTEUX

VP/Senior Financial Analyst, Citigroup



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On Maximizing Your Natural Talents

Be brisk, be splendid, and be public.

— SAMUEL JOHNSON

This book will improve your skills in any speaking situation. It will increase your confidence and charisma. It will improve others' opinions of your character and competence.

But it will do something even more valuable than these important things. *It will dramatically increase your influence with everyone you talk to—about anything.*

Any book that attempts such a task had better focus on your actions as a speaker. By that, I mean your physical behavior and vocal approach that, together, convey messages quite apart from the things you're saying. These are the critical nonverbal components of public speaking, and they are the focus of this book.

How to Give a Speech, then, is a self-improvement book, one that aims to dramatically improve your public speaking *performance*.

Why should you worry about performance? Well, the answer to that is simple. To change people's lives in some positive way—to affect how they think, feel, or act as a result of your presentations—you must perform at the peak of your abilities.

Successful and influential speakers know all about reaching this pinnacle of achievement.

Think of the great orators whose names we honor—people like Pericles in ancient Greece, Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Each of them was famous and everyone knew what they stood for. But it was their stirring addresses in public, their moments of peak performance, that

secured their places in history.

They consciously used their attributes as speakers to the fullest extent possible. They *performed* at their very best.

How to Give a Speech shows you how to maximize your own natural speaking talents in powerful and specific ways. The type of speech or presentation you give doesn't matter. In each case you have the same task: honest communication that reaches your listeners' hearts and minds, while conveying a clear sense of who you are and what you stand for.

Here, then, is solid hands-on advice delivered in what I hope is a compact and reader-friendly package. You can keep this book on your bookshelf if you like. But I urge you to slip it inside your briefcase, purse, or carry-on and take it with you whenever you know you'll be speaking in public. It truly is a guidebook of dynamic public speaking, meant to be as practical as possible.

There are 75 entries in all, written as one-to-four page "Quick Tips" organized in ten chapters. You can read the book from cover to cover, explore a topic that's on your mind at the moment as a speaker, or head straight to any Quick Tip that catches your eye.

Chapter One, "Calming Your Nerves and Gaining Confidence," offers six ways you can do just that. Chapter Two, "Organizing and Preparing Your Material," shows you how to set a clear purpose for your speech or presentation and then accomplish it.

In Chapter Three, "Twelve Easy Ways to Achieve Presence and Charisma," I discuss a dozen practical methods for making a strong impression on your audiences. Chapter Four, "The Power of Your Voice," focuses on the virtually limitless power of the human voice to persuade and influence others.

Creating "Dynamic Introductions and Conclusions" is the essential topic covered in Chapter Five. Chapter Six, "Delivering Your Critical Messages," shows how you can discuss your product, service, or ideas strategically and powerfully.

Chapter Seven, “Engaging and Motivating Audiences,” and Chapter Eight, “Dealing with Skeptical Audiences and Resistance,” offer advice on making your presentations livelier, more involving, and more credible for your listeners.

Chapter Nine, “Handling Q & A Like a Pro,” offers six lessons for improving your skills in question-and-answer sessions. Finally, Chapter Ten, “Nuts & Bolts: Practical Skills for Presenters,” provides a dozen tips for dealing with the challenges that speakers regularly encounter.

How to Give a Speech is the result of my thirty-five years as a professional actor, public speaking professor, and speech coach to clients from around the world. So it’s filled with the practical matters these people have told me are on their minds as presenters.

I’d love to hear from you if you’d like to add to the contributions from this speaking community. Or feel free to simply give me feedback on the book. If there are topics that you’d like to see covered in future editions, I’d be delighted to hear about them.

Now my last word to you before your valuable speech or presentation, is the traditional lovingly intentioned advice from the world of the theater: *Break a leg!*

With best regards,

Gary Genard
gary@garygenard.com

CHAPTER 1

Calming Your Nerves and Gaining Confidence



*“The mind is a wonderful thing.
It starts working the minute you are born and never
stops until you get up to speak in public.”*

— ROSCOE DRUMMOND

1 Got 5 Minutes? — Relax!

“Easy does it.”

“Take it easy.”

“Easy as pie.”

In America, we admire people who not only do things expertly, but who make them seem easy.

I believe one of the reasons we feel this way, is that when things are going smoothly—when we’re hitting on all cylinders—we’re functioning at peak efficiency. And that just feels *right*.

Some people call this level of performance being in “flow,” or nowadays, being in The Zone. Whatever name you attach to it, it’s a feeling of effortlessness—an intense pleasure that comes from focusing completely on a task rather than the obstacles in our way.

The first rule of successful presentations, then, is to bring ourselves to such a state of natural relaxation. Once we do that, we can place our focus where it needs to be. And that’s on our message and our listeners, rather than on the things that make us self-conscious and anxious.

But given today’s hectic professional schedules, we also need a way to help us relax *quickly*. So here’s a wonderful way to achieve a productive level of relaxation (this is not an oxy-moron!) if you only have 5 minutes to spare:

1. **Find a quiet and solitary place.** (In a pinch, a toilet stall will do, or even your car parked outside your speaking venue.) Sit comfortably, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. **Close your eyes.**
3. **“Listen” to your breath for the first minute.** That is, pay attention to what happens when you breathe in slowly and calmly. Understand with your body, not your mind, how breathing nourishes and sustains you. Feel the breath flowing down your throat, filling your lungs, and then bringing life-giving oxygen to every cell in your body.
4. **Now, focus your awareness on a visual image you “see” in your mind.** Make it a neutral color and shape: a green circle, a yellow square, a blue triangle. Any object that doesn’t have emotional overtones for you is fine. (Avoid red as a color.)
5. **See that object in as close to crystal clarity as you can manage.** This will take concentration and a bit of practice at first. As you do, adopt a passive attitude toward any other mental activity. Thoughts, imagery, and feelings will emerge in

your consciousness. Simply notice them then let them go on their way. Keep a gentle yet firm focus on your image. Do nothing; just let your awareness *be*.

- 6. Your breathing will become slower and deeper.** This is what you are aiming for. You're now in a calmer and more relaxed state. When you're ready, open your eyes and slowly stand. If you feel any lightheadedness, sit down again, for your body may not be used to taking in this level of oxygen. Once you have it, try to maintain this level of calmness and *relaxed breathing* as you go on with your daily tasks.

This exercise allows you to calm yourself and focus your attention—two critical attributes of a good speech or presentation. Practice it until you can do it easily at a moment's notice, because that's when you will need it most!

2

From Nervousness to Charisma

Don Knotts was a television comic of the 1950s who was famous for his nervous guy routine. He'd appear in the "Man in the Street" interviews on the Steve Allen Show. This guy would always be a quivering nervous wreck—jiggling legs, facial tics, bulging deer-in-the-headlights eyes. Then he'd reveal his occupation as a brain surgeon or an explosives expert, which was of course hilarious.

When it comes to speaking in public, most of us probably recognize ourselves in The Nervous Guy.

Yet what is perhaps most intriguing about the nerve-racking aspect of public speaking, is the fact that we *need* some nervousness to be good as speakers. If we're not sufficiently activated, we probably won't come across as the personable, charismatic performer who can reach out and connect with listeners.

Your nervousness as a speaker, then, is a relative phenomenon.

Communications researchers estimate, for instance, that only 10-15 percent of the population has severe “communication apprehension,” or CA (also known as speech anxiety), at a level that actively interferes with one’s ability to speak in public. Most of us just experience the normal butterflies. And that, as Martha Stewart would say, is a *good* thing.

Without those butterflies, we would never feel the need to “psyche ourselves up” for a presentation. We’d feel mellow and completely in control—and we’d almost certainly come across as full of ourselves and boring.

Part of the reason we feel nervous, of course, is because of our desire to be good. And that’s just another way of saying we want to *do* good for our listeners. Even though we’re concerned about ourselves, we’re also thinking of others—in this case our audience members. We instinctively want to succeed in driving home our important message to them.

It is this desire to have a meaningful conversation with our listeners—about something that we know matters to them—that makes us personable and focused as speakers. Embrace that need closely enough, and we soon forget about our own jitters. Keeping our eye on the prize of our critical message—and using all of our awareness and speaking tools to do so—we *appear* more confident about what we have to say. And so we are.

All of this adds up to more charisma in the eyes of our audience.

So don’t fear your nervousness. Remind yourself that it’s an essential part of psyching yourself up to do a good job. Turn your attention instead to what you need to say and do to convince *this* audience, in this speech or presentation.

Your listeners will not only see you as more personable. You’ll also be far more persuasive.

3 Create Your Own “Command Performance”

You have a speech or presentation coming up. Naturally, you’ve been thinking about it. The truth is you’ve been kind of *obsessing* about it, haven’t you?

As the gears have been turning in your head, you’ve begun to imagine all kinds of things that might happen concerning your performance—some of them right out of a Stephen King novel.

But why do we beat up on ourselves like this? If we’re going to spend time imagining scenarios for our upcoming presentation, why not make them *positive* scenarios? Otherwise, we run the risk of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, with some of those bad things happening because we’ve really paved the way for them.

So create and internalize a positive outcome to your speech instead. One way to do this is by writing out what I call a “Command Performance Movie.” This is simply a way for you to visualize a successful speech before the fact, so it’s more likely to come true.

The Command Performance Movie isn’t a real movie shot with a camcorder, but instead is a scenario-in-your-own-mind about the good and positive things that are going to occur at your appearance. It should be written out using pencil and paper or a computer keyboard.

Include in your one or two pages your pleasure about speaking at the occasion, the way you accomplish all of your objectives as you go through the speech, the fact that the audience is nodding and paying attention, etc. Also include comments about how everyone seems to perceive you just the way you want them to, personally and professionally. Be sure to put in the specific ways in which you *feel* positive about the experience.

How much detail you include is entirely up to you. That, and

the specific items you mention, are only limited by your (optimistic) imagination!

The following is a sample Command Performance Movie. Yours will be different, since it will be unique to your situation and goals. Wherever possible, make your imagined scenario as close to the actual details of the occasion as you can.



My Command Performance Movie

Today, I'm giving a 45-minute address at a breakout session at the Mega-Movers of the Universe Convention. I'm dressed professionally, in style with good quality clothes that aren't overly flashy. The audience senses that I'm relaxed, confident, and clearly looking forward to giving my talk and sharing ideas with them.

They can see I'm really enjoying being here with the opportunity to speak. After I'm introduced, I step to the lectern, smile, and nod at the audience. I take a slow relaxed breath, and begin my conversation with my listeners.

I speak clearly and knowledgeably, in an easy, confident tone. My voice is lively and engaging. As I make eye contact with audience members, I see that they're paying attention and look interested. I stay focused on my message, which I know is coming through loud and clear. I know this material and I'm really enjoying getting it across!

When I finish, everyone smiles and applauds warmly. They've clearly enjoyed my speech. As I return to my seat I overhear someone say, "Now *that* was an interesting presentation!" I know this has been a rewarding experience for them *and* me.



4 Four Key Ingredients to Achieving Influence as a Speaker

The reason we give speeches and presentations, reports at meetings, sales talks and campaign speeches and every other type of public performance, is to *influence* our listeners somehow. Knowing that we can do so should give us confidence. In fact, it should make us eager to get up on our feet!

Following are what I consider to be the four actions on your part that are essential to achieving influence as a speaker. You should, therefore, include them in every one of your presentations:

1. **Establish Your Credibility.** You must have *credibility* in an audience's mind if you are to get listeners to think, feel, or do what you want them to as a result of your speech.

“Why in the world should I listen to this person?” is the ever-present question in the average listener's mind. It's up to you to supply the answer. And fast: during the first 60 seconds or so of your talk.

Tell them why they should listen to you—and I mean literally tell them. What is your experience to speak on this topic? What's your job title? How long have you been working (or hobbying) in this field?

What did you do to prepare for this particular presentation? Unless you're already famous, you must begin to build your credibility from the very first word out of your mouth. Being credible is what makes you worth listening to and believing.

2. **Be Honest.** Sound obvious? Actually, when we lack confidence in ourselves as presenters, we usually try to be something different from what we really are. We wear a mask. Or we slip on invisible armor to protect ourselves. Worst of all, we

try to be “as good as” someone who’s a successful speaker.

But none of these solutions ever works, because listeners only pay attention when a speaker is being completely honest with them! Each of us is absolutely unique in the universe—and therefore interesting. It is equally unproductive to try to hide from audiences, and to sound like someone we’re not.

To be influential as a speaker, show your listeners your true self.

- 3. Connect With Your Audience.** Always remember that when you speak, you are there for the audience’s benefit, not your own. Therefore, you need to find ways to put yourself in their shoes, so you can understand and meet their needs.

If possible, greet some of your audience members before your presentation. When you speak, continually look your listeners in the eyes. Some presenters are so nervous that they look over the heads of their audience members. But isn’t it easier to speak to other people than to the back wall of a conference room or auditorium?

Equally important: watch your listeners’ reactions. That way, you can adjust your style if need be so you’ll *always* be connecting with them.

- 4. Think in Terms of Action.** Most of us make a pair of mistakes when we give a presentation: (1) we tend to wrap our content around us like a safety blanket, and (2) we keep stepping out of our talking points to wonder how we’re doing as a presenter.

This may be a natural reaction, but it places us 180 degrees from where we want to be when we speak. We should be paying attention to the audience, that is, not our content or ourselves. After all, you should know your topic and who you are pretty well. When you’re presenting, your objective has to be to get that material and yourself across to your audience!

I said at the beginning of this Quick Tip that the reason we speak is always to influence our audiences somehow. So again,

think about what you want your audience to do as a result of this presentation. Exactly how do you plan to change people's lives?

Thinking that way will give your presentation real drive and relevance. It should also remind you of how much your speech really matters.

Now, go influence.

5 **Establishing Rapport with Your Audience**

The first 60 seconds of any presentation is a killer, isn't it?

You're nervous. The audience doesn't know what to expect. And everyone—on a bad night, *you* included—is preoccupied with whatever they were thinking up to the point when you started speaking.

So you'd better hurry up and make a strong introduction, right?

Actually, no. That's the mistake too many speakers make. There's an important and necessary part of your presentation that should precede the introduction.

It's called the *greeting*.

One reason a presenter and his or her audience often feel awkward in one another's presence, is because the speaker hasn't taken time to establish rapport with his or her listeners. Which only stands to reason: before you can begin to talk about your topic, you have to acknowledge the people you'll be talking to!

It's in your greeting that you begin to establish rapport, so it can't be left out. This is the moment you introduce *yourself* to your listeners, and vice versa. The fact that you do it verbally and your listeners do it through nonverbal communication, doesn't matter at all.

Here are 5 Steps you should take to gain audience rapport though a well accomplished greeting. Doing these five things will help you not only start out smoothly, but get listeners on your side immediately:

- 1. Look at your audience as you walk to the lectern or front of the room, or stand at the conference table.** Nothing complicated here. Just remember Noel Coward's advice to actors, to please remember their lines and not bump into the furniture.
- 2. Smile.** Or at least assume a pleasant and *open expression*. It's surprising how many people go through life with a permanent semi-grimace on their face. Why subject your audience to that? Even a eulogy doesn't require an expression of doom, for goodness sake! (Incidentally, I suggest you smile in a conference call too. Your audience will hear it in your voice.)
- 3. Greet them.** Say, "Good morning," "Hello everyone," "Wow, did you see that tornado that just blew down the street?," or anything else that fits the situation and/or the mood of the gathering. In a conference call, this is absolutely essential, and often left out.
- 4. When you reach the spot you'll be speaking from, continue to look at the audience for two or three seconds.** Build anticipation (and make sure everyone has quieted down).
- 5. Introduce yourself—including your title—and reveal your topic.** I tell clients to *re-introduce* themselves when talking to outside audiences, even if everyone present already knows your name and title. Your title is an extremely important part of your credibility, and your listeners need to hear it.
Tell them who you are and what you'll be speaking about today.

HOW TO GIVE A SPEECH

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