

Positive Speaking Tips by *George Torok*

Practise saying nothing. No, not gibberish - nothing, as in silence. It is powerful. Pause before you start, pause after you said something important and pause when you are done.

Your audience will mirror you. If you frown - so will they. If you want them to smile - you must smile. There are no ugly audiences - only ugly speakers.

Keep your hands where we can see them. We will trust you more. Hiding them behind your back will make us wonder, "What is he hiding back there?" Putting them in your pockets may feel good - but you lose power and might appear too casual.

Let your hands hang at your side. As you speak and become involved in your speech you will naturally move them. And it will look natural. You will appear more trustworthy.

Look at the audience - not the screen, the back wall, or your notes. Talk to them - look at them - one at a time. Move your eyes from one to another as though you are having many one-on-one conversations.

When you ask the audience to respond to your question show that you respect their response. Pause and look around the audience; nod your head in approval or show your delight with a smile. Remember you asked them a question. Show that you really wanted an answer.

Sometimes they will laugh when you did not expect it. Pause and let them enjoy it. Smile and show you also have a sense of humour - even if you are not sure why they are laughing.

When you speak before a group, always have a helper who can fix the lights, help with handouts, and usher latecomers to their seats. When looking for volunteers don't waste time waiting for someone to put up their hand - appoint your volunteers. Always thank them.

Always be prepared to handle your worst question. You know what it is - the one you dread the most. It might be too expensive, too cheap, too old, too new, too far, too near... When it is posed you can smile and give the answer you rehearsed.

Don't offend the audience by using words like "obviously" or "everyone knows". If they don't know or think it is not obvious you have insulted them and they will not listen to you.

© George Torok specializes in helping executives and business professionals deliver their messages with impact. He is the host of the weekly radio show, Business in Motion and co-author of the national bestseller, Secrets of Power Marketing.