



GLOW PROFESSIONAL WOMAN

Speak with Confidence AND RULE THE WORLD!

by Diane DiResta, CEO/Founder, DiResta Communications, Inc.

Public speaking is the new competitive advantage in business. Effective public speaking skills can level the playing field and set you apart whether you're interviewing for a job, selling a service or product, or networking for business. Speaking is especially powerful for women because through speaking events, women can raise their profile and increase their visibility.

Public speaking is one of the most cost effective yet under utilized marketing strategies. It can be used to build your brand. The advantage of speaking over social media is the know, like, trust factor. When an audience hears you speak in public, you establish yourself as an expert. Speaking is a more direct way of building trust. The listeners can experience first hand the value you offer and what it would be like to work with you.

With all these benefits, why don't more people choose to speak in public?

After years of speaking to groups and coaching clients, I've learned that there are two reasons: Fear and ignorance. People are afraid of looking foolish and/or they don't know the skills of effective speaking.

The secret to public speaking is confidence. When you're confident you feel you can rule the world. Here are six tips you need to know to master confident public speaking.

1. It's Not About You; It's About the Audience

Nervousness is self-centeredness. Your focus is on yourself. Nervous speakers live in the future imagining all the things that could go wrong. "What if I trip or go blank? "

Get over yourself! Change your focus and consider the audience. Ask yourself, "How can I make them feel comfortable? The audience is on your side. You have information they want to hear or they wouldn't be there. Don't give away your power. You have a right to be there.

2. Prepare Mentally and Physically

When it comes to speaking it's 90% preparation and 10% delivery. Convert your script to bullet points so that you can sound conversational and then practice out loud and time yourself.

Get into a "power posture" before the presentation. Stand up straight and place both hands on your hips. Hold this (Wonder Woman) posture for two minutes. Amy Cuddy, a social psychologist at Harvard University, states that these positions can increase testosterone and cortisol levels in the brain which are present in dominant, confident leaders.

3. Take Baby Steps

Gifted speakers are born. Effective speakers are made. And even the great speakers didn't start out keynoting to a thousand people. Start at the beginning with a tele-conference. Move on to speaking for five minutes on a panel. Participate in an interview. Bring a partner and deliver a two person demonstration. Continue to challenge yourself with longer and higher stakes presentations. Hone your skills with classes and coaching. Observe the

best speakers live and online. Borrow their techniques and make them your own.

4. Create Compelling Content

You don't have to be the best speaker or even an excellent speaker if you have outstanding content. I've heard TED.com speakers who used a lot of — ums/and/you knows — and got a standing ovation because they told a compelling story. When you hear an elevator pitch do you gravitate to the person who says she's a dentist? Or do you remember the dentist who says, "I create smiles"? The secret to creating compelling content is to tell your story. Storytelling immediately engages an audience and because stories have a natural sequence, they are easy to remember. That builds confidence.

5. Open with a Memorable Hook

Grab attention with your opening line and you'll have an engaged audience. Attention spans are short and your opening line can determine whether the audience listens to you. Avoid the standard, "I'm going to talk to you today about..." Instead, begin with a startling statistic, a humorous quote, a surprising action, or a short story. Get right into your story with an opening line such as "It was the year 2003..." One of the most memorable openings I heard was from a woman from the American Cancer Association. She paused, looked at the audience and said, "Turn and look at the person on your right. Turn and look at the person on your left. One of you will have cancer in your lifetime." That was 10 years ago. I don't remember the woman but I remember her opening.

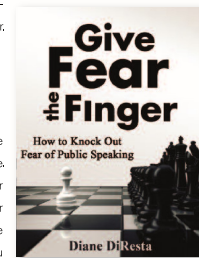
6. Embrace Silence

The way to go from good to great and from nervous to confident is to master the pause. Presenters who speak

fast are perceived as nervous. Confident speakers pause. Most people are not speed talkers; they simply forget to come to a stop. Some people drive through a stop sign while others give a quick tap on the break before they barrel through the sign. Just like in good driving, pausing entails coming to a complete STOP at the end of a sentence. Why is pausing so powerful? It allows you to breathe and recall your information. It gives the brain time to process what you just said. If you speak without stopping the information goes by the brain like a tickertape. Most importantly, pausing allows the message to land in the hearts of the listeners. To make an emotional impact, you must pause. An audience

is moved to action by emotion more than data. So, count 2 or 3 beats of silence before you move on to the next point. For more dramatic effect, use a longer pause. Confident speakers are comfortable with silence.

These six tips will help you to look and feel confident. Anybody can be an effective public speaker. It's a decision. You may not feel confident immediately; yet, more you speak, the more confident you'll feel. And then you can rule your world.



Her new ebook, Give Fear the Finger will be released in 2014

Diane DiResta is the Founder and CEO of DiResta Communications, Inc., a New York City consultancy serving business leaders who want to communicate with greater impact – whether one-to-one, in front of a crowd or from an electronic platform. DiResta is the author of Knockout Presentations: How to Deliver Your Message with Power, Punch, and Pizzazz, an Amazon.com category best-seller and widely-used text in college business communication courses. www.diresta.com

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