

9 Steps to Your Best Speech Ever!

A Guidebook for Speakers

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that your colleague or boss has proposed that you give a speech at an upcoming event. Your first response might be a “yes” finding the idea interesting or even exciting, and seeing the opportunities for your personal development.

In the next instant, you might sense your body pulling away as if to communicate a silent “no”. You may even experience excitement and fear at the same time. If one or both of these emotions are showing up it’s a good sign that you should go for it!

Delivering a speech is a vulnerable and powerful experience. From the moment we decide to engage in speaking to an audience, most of us sense some level of resistance or anxiety in our bodies. Some of us are triggered by the mere thought of speaking to an audience, which leads many to give up before they even try.

When you find the courage to accept your own vulnerability and say "YES!" to delivering that speech in spite of it all ~ the experience offers significant growth opportunities to the brave souls who are willing to try it! Each time you find the courage to speak to an audience your fear will become a little smaller in size and strength until eventually you won’t struggle anymore!

The 3 keys to delivering a great speech are **Essence, Creativity, and Commitment**. **1.** Your essence is who you're **being** when you are your most authentic and expanded self. Consult with your Higher Self in this journey. **2.** Delivering a speech is a highly **creative process** from beginning to end. You are invited to activate your creativity as you imagine, prepare, and write your speech, as you practice it out loud and deliver it to your audience. **3. Your commitment to doing the work** in order to be well informed and well prepared for the day of your speech is essential!

The 9 steps will help you navigate the occasionally choppy waters of public speaking and guide you in a process of becoming a more confident and skilled speaker. Each step is represented by a different-colored pyramid and a series of questions for journaling.

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I'm certain that if you commit wholeheartedly to this process, you'll find the clarity, courage, and willpower to deliver your best speech ever, improve your relationship with speaking to audiences, and even enjoy it! Find a quiet place and take the time to answer all the questions for each step and write your answers in a journal so you can refer back to them. **Enjoy the journey!**



STEP 1

INTENTION

Decide who you want to be and how you want to feel as a speaker. One of the benefits of attempting something new or challenging is that it allows you to view yourself and your life from a new perspective. Imagine you can fly to the top of a mountain or a cloud in the sky. Go on, fly there now and get settled.

Now, observe yourself and your life on earth from that vantage point. What are you busy doing? Who are you spending time with? How are you interacting with people? Is life going well for you or is it a struggle? What opportunities are there for you to play a bigger game? Are you excited about this speaking event? Are you committed to giving the necessary time and energy to deliver your best speech ever?

QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALING:

1. What could this upcoming speaking event represent in your life?
2. How might the experience change you?
3. Who do you want to be in this next phase of your life?
4. What will you do differently from now on?
5. How do you want to show up as a speaker?
6. Set an Intention for your speaking event, e.g. "I want to be relaxed, confident and have fun."
7. What's the impact you'd like to have on your listeners?
8. How do you want to make them feel?

STEP 2

ENERGY

Everything begins with energy! It's important to be in the right energy before you speak, go on stage, or enter the meeting room. The right energy is the energy you choose, as opposed to the energy of your habits or mood swings. Tune in to your energy right now. How would you describe it? What emotions, feelings, thoughts, or pictures are showing up for you in this moment? Make a point of noticing your energy 2-3 times a day.

Notice the effects your energy has on your body. Identify the energy or feeling you'd like to have while delivering your speech. For example, you may want to step into the feeling of calm confidence, fiery excitement, or light & humorous depending on what will be best for the speech you're delivering. It's important that your energy be strong and focused from the start to capture the audience's attention and to stay strong in your body and voice throughout your speaking time.

Continue to observe your energy and endeavor to keep it up during the entire speech. Then raise your energy again with your closing statements for a solid completion. Whether you're working with or without a script (or talking points), the biggest benefit comes from rehearsing the words out loud many times over until you feel confident that you can deliver it in an effective way. Each time you speak the words out loud they take on more meaning and become more embodied as you speak them. Have a plan for self-care before and after your speech to ensure that your most important needs are met to feel strong, balanced, and energetic on the day of your speech!

STEP 3

PRESENCE

Know that your presence (or lack thereof) is felt the moment you enter the room or go on stage. Stand up and walk around to get present in your body before you go on stage, or enter the room. Notice your posture and make any necessary adjustments to step into the feeling you want to be in before entering. Ground your feet to the floor (and the earth below) for that feeling of stability under your feet and in your voice. Stand with your legs hip-width apart and the soles of your shoes connecting to the floor. Imagine sending down roots from the bottoms of your feet. Feel supported by the earth's gravitational pull holding you.

Tune in to your environment and be present to all that is around you. Open all your senses and allow yourself to be a part of this ever-evolving present moment. Look at (or imagine) your audience members, observe and feel the space you are in. Breathe in the energy of that space as you get a feel for it, and as you breathe out imagine your energy mixing and mingling with the energy of the space. If there is an emotion that you need to let go of (e.g., anxiety) discharge that energy into the ground through the soles of your feet. You might step into the feeling of excitement instead so you can be strong in your energy and voice right from the start.

Observe your energy and endeavor to keep it flowing for the entire speech. Then raise your energy a little with your closing statements for a solid completion. Whether you're working with or without a script or talking points, the biggest benefit comes from rehearsing your content out loud multiple times until you feel confident that you can deliver it in a clear, effective, and natural way. Each time you practice speaking the words out loud they take on more meaning and become embodied. Trust in yourself as a speaker and trust in your essence. Its impact is immediate!

STEP 4

AWARENESS

Observe your relationship with speaking to an audience and shine light on your habits (both the good and bad habits). Ask yourself: What is my current relationship with speaking or presenting? What do I dislike about it? What do I like or love about it? What usually goes well? Where do I get into difficulties? What aspects of speaking, communicating, or presenting do I avoid or shy away from? (Those are growth areas!)

Here are a few examples: Do I have difficulty breathing? / ...being heard? / ... asking questions? / ...asking for help? / ...remembering things? / ...writing my speech/ ...talking about myself? / ...telling stories? / ...engaging audience members? / ...moving around comfortably and naturally on stage? / ...using my body and hands to communicate?

This is a good time to identify your habits, to let go of any unhelpful habits and install a new habit that will support you in your process! If you don't have a good sense of your speaking habits ask 1 or 2 people that you feel comfortable with for some feedback. I would also like you to consider the relationship you have with yourself. It's important to be conscious of the things you say to yourself because the words, attitudes, and tone of voice have a huge impact on how you feel.

You can hear or observe your relationship to yourself by paying close attention to your own self-talk. Self-talk can be silent words coming from the mind or they may words and phrases that you say out loud to yourself.

QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALING:

1. What kind of things do you habitually say to yourself?
2. In what ways are you hard on yourself?
3. How can you be more kind and supportive with yourself?

EXERCISE:

This week choose to let go of one bad habit that's been getting in your way as a speaker, and add one new habit that will support you!

STEP 5

CREATIVITY

Begin by acknowledging that you are inherently creative even if you don't think so! Call on your **Higher Self** or your **Inner Artist** for guidance throughout this process. You can do this by closing your eyes and asking a question silently in your mind's eye such as "Inner Artist, what kind of speech would be best for this audience?" or "How can I improve this part of my speech?" After asking a question sit patiently in silence with your eyes closed listening for an answer. Open to receiving an answer. If you don't get an answer, let that be ok and don't make a story about it. Just try again another time.

All humans are creative, yet many of us don't practice our creativity. EXERCISE: To activate your creativity step into the energy of curiosity and playfulness! Have a journal or paper to write or sketch and some pencil crayons, markers or watercolors and paint brushes (whatever medium you prefer) to express your creativity. Find a quiet and comfortable place that is clear and tidy where you can work. Light a candle if you have one to open Sacred Space. Begin creating on the page by capturing the answers you received in images, colours, and/or words. When you have finished with illustrating a) move on to b) and so on...

Reserve an hour for this process. Beginning with a) Read the question out loud to yourself, then close your eyes and focus on it for a couple of minutes. When you're ready open your eyes and begin to illustrate, draw, or outline what came up for you, then move on to b), c), etc.

- a) What kind of speech do I want to deliver?
- b) How do I want to feel while delivering this speech?
- c) What kind of impact do I want to have on my audience?
- d) How will they be changed by listening to my speech?
- e) How will I be changed by delivering this speech?
- f) What words and key messages do I want to convey to my audience?

Make sure you have a captivating opening statement to begin your speech and a strong closing statement to bring it to a satisfying close!

STEP 6

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

Acknowledge and accept your feelings about speaking to an audience and let them be expressed in the right time and place. If you have some uncomfortable feelings coming up, it's important to make time and space for that early on and ask for some support from a coach or specialist if needed. The more you ignore or suppress your feelings, the stronger they will become until you have accepted, acknowledged and allowed them to be expressed.

Stop what you're doing right now and tune into any feelings or emotions in your body. How do you feel in this moment? Describe how you feel as best you can in your journal so that you can come back to it later. Name the emotion or feeling that you're experiencing. Where are you feeling it in your body? How strong is the feeling on a scale of (low) 1 to 10 (high)?

Techniques such as Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT), diaphragmatic breathing, hypnosis, and grounding are helpful for working with your feelings and emotions. We can immediately respond to our feelings by acknowledging and feeling the emotions as they arise when we are in a safe place to do so. When we're not in the right place to do so we can make note of the feeling and when it came up to come back to it later within a safe place. It's very important to acknowledge and speak to the difficult feelings as part of the process for preparing to speak. After completing your preferred method, tune in to your state of being once again. How do you feel now? Again write it down in your journal.

This centered and grounded way of being is your capacity to be fully present in the moment. Presence will be your foundation throughout this journey. If you lose the foundation by getting distracted or triggered at some point, just breathe and bring your awareness back to what is happening in the moment, feel your feet on the floor, and come back to the present moment.



STEP 7

CONNECTION

Connect with your event host to build rapport & get informed about any logistics or other things you need to know. Prepare your questions. How much time will I have to speak? When do I go on stage? What kind of people will be in the audience? How many people will there be in the audience? Will there be time for Q&A after my speech? What's the venue and where is it located? If you know any other speakers who will be there you might want to get in touch with them to create a sense of comradery leading up to and during your event..

Can I visit the venue to practice speaking on stage before the event? Is there anything I should bring with me such as equipment, food & drink...? Is there anything else I should know? Is there a number where I can reach you in case I have more questions?

Look for opportunities to get to know and make agreements with others to make sure you are clear on all the logistics. Maintain relationships with key people by checking in periodically via phone or email to stay informed about how things will happen on the day of your speech. Knowing your audience, their knowledge of the subject matter that you'll be delivering, and their expectations, are all important pieces of information to gain an understanding of how you can best engage and serve them on the day.



STEP 8

ACCOUNTABILITY

Be accountable first and foremost to yourself. If you don't feel confident from the start let that be ok and make a commitment to yourself to do the preparation work each day. Plan the work in your agenda and follow through on it. Reach for daily progress, not perfection! Each day that you advance in your work will give you a sense of accomplishment and confidence.

Divide the preparation work in half according to the date of your speaking event. Dedicate the first half of that time to preparing your script, story, or presentation and the second half to rehearsing your script out loud in the best way possible.

Work back from the date of your event and decide when you'd like to have the preparation work completed. Honour your commitment to preparing for the speech by being mindful of the day and time and activating your will to complete each step. This way, you'll benefit from the satisfaction of seeing your work progress. It will also raise your self-confidence and self-trust.

Listen to yourself in this process of preparing, take care of yourself by meeting your own needs, and ask for help when needed.



STEP 9

PRACTICE

Striving for perfection will always have you feeling like it's not good enough. Relax into your being and lean into your unique voice and style while being true to yourself. From your desired way of feeling or being, **practice speaking your entire speech out loud** (at least 5-10 times or as many times as needed until you have it memorised) as if you were already delivering it on that future day whether online or on location with your audience. Once you've practiced it multiple times, try working from a **simple outline with key words & or images** from your speech to guide you. Then work with the outline until you don't need it anymore.

During this speaking out loud practice, **listen to your own voice**. Imagine your listeners receiving your words eagerly. Pay attention to the sound and energy of your voice. Consider the pace and volume of your voice. Do you sense that you're speaking too fast? Then slow it down a little. Did the energy of your voice drop out? Then re-read that sentence or word with a bit more energy until it feels right. Are you sounding monotone in your voice? Then bring more enthusiasm or emotion into your way of speaking.

Make purposeful adjustments to your voice and speech as you go along, but don't be nitpicky! Once you're satisfied with it, start practicing it out loud piece by piece, until you no longer need to look at your script or outline. Then assemble a small audience of 1-3 people (whose opinions you value) to practice delivering your speech to an audience and get some feedback.

This process can take some time but it's well worth the effort because it will free you from the stress of not knowing (or remembering) what you wanted to say, thereby helping you to be fully present and on point the day of your speech. Sometimes while practicing your speech out loud something magical happens! During this speaking out loud process you may suddenly hear your voice "drop in" in a way that it never did before (others will notice it too) as if your words have real weight!

With the completion of each step, you'll come closer to feeling complete in relation to your upcoming speech. You will also gain self-confidence and self-trust along the way. Each step you complete frees you up so that on the day of your speech, you can just **be yourself and actually enjoy the experience!**

Make this process your own.

I encourage you to modify the steps, change the order, adapt the language, or add any additional lighthouses you need to make this process complete in your eyes!

Keep reaching for the most expanded version of yourself, and as you go about your day, listen for the purpose driven voice of truth from within you. Embody and express that voice!

Yours vocally,

Allison