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# MEDIA TRAINING

*A Critical Guide To Stand Out & Impress In Any Media Situation*

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**eBook Edition**

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**FIA & GREGG FASBINDER**

We started with a single goal: to teach authentic performance. When speakers began asking Fia Fasbinder for help with the skills she'd learned at the prestigious NYU Tisch School of the Arts, the need was clear. Fia's husband Gregg Fasbinder—entrepreneur and Fortune 100 executive—saw how better training could meet that need. Every day the team they've built—which includes Emmy award-winning trainers, renowned writers, designers, and entrepreneurs—creates transformation, from the C-suites of Fortune 500 firms to internationally broadcast events.

Our background means we approach all speaking engagements differently.

## THE MOXIE INSTITUTE KNOWS HOW TO TAKE YOUR PERFORMANCE FROM BORING TO BRAVO.

When you and your team need to deliver world-class performances, **we'll be there.**



Our acting and broadcast experience made us experts in stage presence and on-camera delivery



Our work in higher education made our workshops models of adult learning, based in the latest research in psychology, neuroscience, and performance studies



Our years of live and recorded media events taught us all the tricks of the trade



You'll benefit from all that experience in each line we write, each slide we design, and every minute of our famous coaching and training



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# 01

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## CHAPTER

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# **TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION**

## TO IMPRESS AND EXUDE CONFIDENCE

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Have you ever been called out for accidentally sending the wrong nonverbal message?

Maybe you were inadvertently making a face, crossing your arms, or slouching over when you didn't even realize it. There are so many types of nonverbal communication, and many of them probably feel involuntary.

The good news is, with practice or even the assistance of a [media trainer](#), you can learn to be more mindful about your body language and ensure you're sharing your message with confidence.

In addition, being mindful of your body language and facial expressions will also help you look good on camera. In a live audience situation, examples of nonverbal communication might include eye contact, how you use the space, or any gestures you make.

You don't need to be a body language expert to master the nonverbal communication techniques discussed here, and they can take your next [public speaking](#) appearance from good to great.

## SO WHAT IS NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION?

In Amy Cuddy's Ted Talk on body language, she reimagined the phrase "fake it till you make it" to "fake it till you become it." Developing effective nonverbal communication skills can not only make you look more confident, but feel more confident too.

If you're nervous, your body language might be revealing exactly how you feel to your audience—which isn't good if you want to be the trusted authority figure on camera.

Even fear has physical effects on your body. But the good news is, you can combat them. Rehearsal and repetition will help a lot in building your confidence and helping you feel more relaxed on the day, and Fia's video below will show what to practice.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—7 Deadly Sins Of Nonverbal Communication**

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Your nonverbal communication skills have power and you can use them to your advantage.

For example you can:

## ▶ #1 — Own The Space

A confident speaker will engage with their audience by moving or gesturing towards them. Be sure to speak with the production team to understand where you can and can't move to.

If you're standing and speaking during a live-streamed event for example, then move to different parts of the stage to speak to the audience.

## ▶ #2 — Use Open, Powerful Body Language

Whether you're sitting or standing, having your shoulders back with a straight posture can make a world of difference in how people perceive you and how you feel about yourself. Keep your feet firmly planted on the ground to be more grounded and trust your natural hand gestures to emphasize specific points.

It's important to make sure you're framed correctly so that your gestures aren't lost off camera. Again, speak with the production team to know, or if you're at home, record yourself talking and watch it back.

Body language is often referred to as being key in relationships, and that's exactly what a speaker is doing: building relationships and trust with the members of the audience.

## ▶ #3 — Facial Expressions

For all media engagements, your facial expressions are essential to convey your mood, enthusiasm, and help your audience understand how they should be feeling.

A common teaching in [sales training](#) is to smile even when talking to a client on the phone! This is because your facial expressions influence your tone of voice in ways that any one listening will pick up on. So even if you're on a purely audio-based media engagement, like a podcast or radio show, be sure to use the same expressions as you would if you were in person.

However, remember that your face will likely take up most of the screen when you are talking, so you don't need to make your expressions as big as you might do on stage. Again, knowing what the right amount of expression feels like, takes practice and recording yourself to get right.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—7 Deadly Sins Of Nonverbal Communication**



## ▶ #4 — Eye Contact

If you have an audience in front of you, briefly make eye contact with multiple members of the audience. If you are on camera, maintain eye contact with the camera lens when you are talking directly to the audience. Doing this helps your audience feel connected with you and builds trust. Otherwise, always keep eye contact with your host and any other speakers to establish a stronger rapport and more impactful conversation.

Always make sure to know where the camera lens is and if multiple angles are being taken.

## ▶ #5 — Energy

Imagine a famous celebrity speaker. When you think about their on-camera presence, you'll notice almost none are quiet, monotone, and still. Instead, they tend to all be loud, expressive, and full of movement!

**This is for two reasons:**

- ▶ **Energy is infectious.** The more you express a certain emotion they more likely others will start to feel it too. It's why we can't help but laugh when watching someone else cry with laughter. Or how we also feel tense and angry when someone is furious about a topic. If you want people to feel excited about your idea, you have to bring that excitement and passion to your body language.
- ▶ **The camera requires extra effort.** When speaking to an in-person audience, they are far more receptive to your emotions. On camera however, you need to be much more expressive for it to translate well to viewers. Think of your emotional range out of 10. If 7 is good for in person, you'll need to crank to 9 or 10 on camera.

## ▶ #4 — Your Hand Gestures

We have some great news for you about this. There is no special technique or difficult patterns to learn, instead all you have to do is your natural hand gestures. The irony is that this is sometimes harder than people think.

When you're laughing with friends and telling stories, you never think about what you are doing with your hands. But often the second a camera points at a person's face, they become nervous and self-conscious and stop acting naturally.

Practice gestures by making sure the camera is only showing the top half of your body and framed relatively close. You'll notice that if you don't lift your hands up high enough they can't be seen, and if you go too big or wide, they go out of frame.

Practice until it feels more natural so that when the real moment comes, you can feel more relaxed.

Rehearsing in front of a trusted colleague or with a [media trainer](#) will give you helpful in-moment feedback about nonverbal messages you might not realize you are sending. Once you refine these details, you'll move like a body language expert on stage and in front of any camera!

## DRESSING THE PART

At the end of your presentation, what do you hope people are talking about?

Unless you're making a speech about fashion design, the audience shouldn't be remembering your outfit. The right choice can help you feel more confident and create a great first impression with your audience. Here are some quick tips for picking out your outfit.

### DO

- ▶ Pick bold jewel tones like magenta, emerald green, navy blue, or purple
- ▶ Dress one level above your audience; this could mean anything from a sweater and jeans or a full suit depending on the subject matter and who is in the audience
- ▶ Wear classic, simple shapes like a polished button down and blazer
- ▶ Make sure your clothing is tailored properly to fit you and free of wrinkles
- ▶ Bring a few clothing choices the day of the media engagement. This also helps in case of unpredictable temperatures in the space
- ▶ Wear something that makes you feel confident!

### DON'T

- ▶ Pick bold prints or heavy textures like velvet; these can be distracting for your audience and may not translate well on camera
- ▶ Choose all black or all white; these colors cause details to get lost on camera and at a distance if you're an audience member in the back row
- ▶ Wear logos, unless you are specifically promoting that company
- ▶ Wear anything that might make noise, like a stack of bracelets or stiletto heels on a wooden stage

If you're going to be wearing a wired microphone, be mindful of where it can be clipped. They are traditionally placed on a jacket lapel or shirt collar, but may tug too much on a thin blouse or be spotted through thinner fabrics. If your mic is wireless, you'll need somewhere to clip the transmitter, like a belt or a waistband, so wearing a dress may cause some technical difficulties.

If you aren't sure about the microphone or lighting setup, bring a few different clothing options with you the day of so you are prepared for any scenario and will ultimately be happy with your appearance.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

You've picked out your outfit, now it's time to make sure your hair and makeup are ready to go. Guys, this means you too.

Before you panic, being on camera does not mean you need to do anything crazy. Schedule major appointments with plenty of time before your media engagement, in case there is downtime needed (like with skincare treatments) or in case you need to make changes (such as a major haircut or hair color.) Spray tans are a skin-safe way to get a little color before your moment in the spotlight, but try to schedule them 4-5 days in advance so the color has time to fully develop.

**For the ladies, or those with long hair styles::** Practice styling your hair the way you plan on doing it on the actual day and keep it done for your rehearsals; this will help any day-of jitters. Make sure it's out of your face and won't be distracting to you or your audience.

You also don't need to worry about overhauling your makeup routine to look good on camera. Use matte colors as opposed to shimmers, go a little more heavy-handed with blush and bronzer, and make sure everything matches your skin tone and is blended out. When in doubt, use neutral shades that just help enhance your features.

**For the gentlemen, or those with short hair styles:** get things touched up by a professional closer to the date so they look neat. Don't forget about facial hair.

Take pride in your uniqueness: embrace your blue hair or your cool tattoo! Appearance is one of the types of nonverbal communication, and can help you relate to your audience and create a memorable first impression.



# 02

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## CHAPTER

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### **HOW TO MAKE YOUR VOICE SOUND BETTER: 10 TIPS FOR SPEAKING ON CAMERA**

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Rehearsing in front of a trusted colleague or with a [media trainer](#) will give you helpful in-moment feedback about nonverbal messages you might not realize you are sending. Once you refine these details, you'll move like a body language expert on stage and in front of any camera!

## TIP 1: WANT A CLEAR VOICE ON CAMERA? CONSIDER THE TECHNOLOGY.

No matter the setting for your media appearance, be aware of the technical options available to help you sound better and possible distractions that can cause issues.

For example, if you're going to be recording yourself or going live from your home, consider background noise like an air conditioner, refrigerator ice maker, or your dog who also has something to say. Turn off any loud appliances before you go live and let those you live with know that you need their silence.

These noises are easily picked up by internal microphones such as the kind built into your laptop or phone. An external microphone, like a headset, USB microphone, or lapel mic will be much better at only picking up your voice and ignoring background noise.

The good news is, if you are going to be speaking from a news station or somewhere else with a professional setup, they will likely handle this for you. However, it doesn't hurt to ask what their setup is beforehand so you can be prepared.

## TIP 2: DO A PROPER WARM UP TO ENSURE YOUR VOICE IS AT ITS BEST

A pro athlete wouldn't take to the field without stretching and nor would a news anchor go in front of the camera without doing a proper vocal warm up.

Your vocal chords are muscles that need to be stretched and worked out to work at their best. So before getting in front of the camera, take a few moments to loosen up your face and jaw muscles.

### Try these exercises:

- ▶ *Make big yawning motions with your mouth*
- ▶ *Do exaggerated chewing movements*
- ▶ *Close your lips and blow air through them to rumble them*
- ▶ *Hum for five full breaths*

Whether your voice tends to quiver or you have a habit of speaking too fast, Fia breaks down the techniques to overcome common speaking issues in the video below.

### TIP 3: GIVE YOUR VOICE MORE ENERGY THAN NORMAL

The most dynamic and memorable public speakers don't appear that way by accident.

Just as the camera can add ten pounds (depending on the lens used), it can also cut your energy in half. If you aren't excited and passionate about what you're talking about, you can't expect your audience to be either.

There's a reason we all know that watching something on a screen isn't the same as attending it live. In person, you can feel the energy of the speaker and the crowd much easier.

However, you may also have gotten goosebumps from exceptionally good performances even when seeing them at home on a device. What makes these so powerful is that the speaker is going all out and giving 100% of their energy and passion to the audience. Their emotion is so clear that mirror neurons in your premotor cortex 'mirror' them and cause you to feel the same emotion.

If you want to achieve a similar on-camera presence, this is where recording your speaking practice comes in handy.

Try recording once with your normal energy output and another time bumping up the energy 50%. Do you see and feel the difference? Your audience definitely will.



 [Click here to watch our YouTube video—5 Tips For Vocal Executive Presence](#)

## TIP 4: THE CONTEXT CHANGES HOW MUCH YOU NEED TO PROJECT

Whenever you have a media engagement, be mindful of what kind of technology is being used and how close or far away you are from the microphone to make sure you speak at an appropriate volume for the setting. If you have professional technical support during your media appearance, don't be afraid to ask for their help in what will make you look and sound your best.

If you're at home, just like with your energy, record yourself speaking at various volumes into your microphone to hear how it sounds. Listen with both your speakers and headphones to ensure you find the right balance.

**Here are some examples:**

### ▶ **Prerecorded Media**

From podcasts to interviews, when your media opportunity is prerecorded you can be more relaxed with how you project. This means if you happen to yell in excitement or go too quiet at certain points, they have the ability to fix the volume in the editing process. So you can be as loud and animated as you like without worrying too much about how it will affect the listeners.

### ▶ **Live Streamed Events**

In contrast, when you're live, people could be watching on TV, through their computer speakers, or headphones. This means if you're suddenly very loud, you may literally be yelling into someone's ear. To be safe, match the volume of your host and put more energy into your movements rather than your voice.



## TIP 5: LEARN TO BREATHE—BUT NOT THE WAY YOU'RE USED TO

Actors are taught this technique and we want to share it with you as one of the [media training](#) basics. Controlling your voice, in reference to volume or steadiness, requires controlling your breath. A bonus to this exercise is that controlling your breath can also help you lower your anxiety. Yep, diaphragmatic breathing can literally make you less stressed. But how?.

When you're anxious, your body wants you to take faster and shallower breaths, which doesn't help the anxiety but does get oxygen circulating to all of the key places. Breathing with your diaphragm can help you feel more steady and make your voice sound better by putting some force behind it.

This exercise is best utilized close to “action” - for example, while the podcast or radio host is introducing your segment, or during a commercial break. You can also practice this while driving to the studio, or while laying in bed the night before.



## TIP 6: ENUNCIATE EVERY SYLLABLE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL

Let's face it, we get pretty lazy when we're texting or talking to our friends. We might use more abbreviations, or let our words run together. However, we're not “gonna” do that during a media appearance. You want to make sure you're using a clear voice so that every syllable is heard by every member of your audience, whether they're sitting in front of you or hundreds of miles away. When you first start practicing, it's going to feel very overexaggerated and not at all conversational, but over time, it will look and sound more natural.

This podcast episode by All Ears English talks about the most common connected speech mistakes made by native English speakers—do you recognize any of them in your own speech?



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Not Be Scared: Ultimate Technique To Conquer Fear**



## **TIP 7: GIVE IT SOME SPICE: ADD INFLECTION**

No matter where you're from or what kind of radio you're used to listening to, you're probably familiar with that iconic radio DJ voice—it applies to news anchors and sports commentators too.

They all can add or emphasize a mood or tone to anything that they're saying to enrich it and make it pleasing to hear. And you can do the same. The beauty of speech is that there's so much variation; use the lows, the highs, the slowing down, and the speeding up to your advantage.

When you're speaking with the host or to the audience, think about the kinds of emotions you want them to experience and mirror your tone to match.

If your topic or story is exciting and joyful, you might speed up your voice or increase your pitch to keep your listeners on the edge of their seats. If it's more somber, your voice may get deeper and you might slow down.

## **TIP 8: VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE: CHANGE YOUR PACE**

As mentioned in the previous tip and just as in writing, it's important to think about sentence structure in putting together your messaging for your media appearance.

You want to mix up longer sentences with shorter ones, as well as speed up and slow down, to make sure your audience is engaged from start to finish. Monotony is the fastest way to lose an audience's attention or have them change the channel.

Though we always recommend memorizing stories or key messaging when needed, it won't sound better if the memorization overshadows the natural changes that occur when speaking.

The goal is to practice until it becomes second nature—that's when it sounds natural.

## **TIP 9: PAUSE—THE RIGHT WAY**

No one likes an awkward silence, but sometimes an intentional pause can be used to your advantage.

Pausing at just the right moment could give your audience an opportunity to think about what was just said, brainstorm a solution to a problem, or emphasize an important point. They won't remember that you paused, but they will remember what you said and how it made them feel.

If you're on a podcast, a radio interview, or a news appearance, a pause is the perfect way to give yourself, and your host) time to reflect and give a considered response. It's how many people remain calm and in control even if the conversation becomes tense or combative.

## TIP 10: DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE AUTHENTICALLY YOURSELF

Even if you don't feel like a professional or have some reservations, the best way to become more comfortable is to turn on the camera and hit record. Just getting used to having one in front of you will help ease your nerves. The more you practice and the more [media training](#) opportunities you take advantage of, the more confident you will feel and the more you will learn how to make your voice sound better.

If you're using a cell phone to record yourself, you may be tempted to use the front camera so you can see yourself. Try to resist the urge; looking into a front camera means you'll likely be making eye contact with yourself on screen instead of the camera itself. Put some thought into your camera setup to make sure you are showing yourself at your best.

Remember: the best part of your media appearance is that you're giving it. You bring something unique and authentic to the table. And your speaker persona is just that: you at your absolute best. We want you to put your best foot forward every time the camera is on you, but what does that look like?

It's still you, just a little bit more polished, dynamic, and eloquent. The audience is here for you, and that's the most important part to remember when considering what your speaker persona looks like. You don't need to drastically change your appearance, the way your voice sounds, or the way you carry yourself—people will know that you're faking!

### ► Pretend You're Speaking To A Friend

If you're being asked to make a media appearance, it's probably because you're an expert in the field or have a great story to tell.

You want your audience to trust you as an authority but also feel as if they can relate to you. One of the best ways to do this is to imagine that there's a good friend of yours sitting just behind the camera or in the audience. How would you share your story with them? You want to keep your tone conversational and engaging, but also make sure you're thoroughly explaining more complex points.

A great example of this would be morning shows that bring in different segments and guests. If a professional chef, for example, visits the show to teach the hosts a recipe, they make their instructions easy for anyone to understand and recreate at home. They may not use ingredients that are hard to find, or provide substitutions to limit barriers. When preparing for your media appearance, what barriers can you remove for the audience?

*We Promise, With Practice You Will Sound Better.*

These ten tips are small adjustments that you can make simply using the power and range of your voice.

By being aware of and adjusting your tone, pace, and inflection, you'll sound a lot more confident when you step in front of the camera at your next media appearance.

# 03

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CHAPTER

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## **EASY GUIDE TO USING A TELEPROMPTER** AND HOW THEY WORK

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What does the teleprompter have in common with kleenex, masonite, and bubble wrap?

It's a trademarked name that became generic. It's been around that long. Much of the content that we take for granted when we turn on the TV—from newsrooms to presidential speeches—are possible only with the aid of a teleprompter.

Read on to find out how to use a teleprompter and speak like a professional!

## HOW DO YOU READ A TELEPROMPTER?

Just for the sake of argument, suppose that you get a phone call as soon as you wake up, telling you that your team landed you a huge media appearance that will send your company's sales to the moon.

All that's required is that you show up and deliver a long speech reading from a teleprompter.

You may not know what to think the first time you see one. Do you look into it? Around it? Where's the camera? Are you supposed to stick your head inside of it? It's got some hood over it like a baby carriage, but you don't hear anything crying.

"Where's the camera?" you ask.

A scurrying staff member hastily gestures to a screen that has letters on it. That can't be. It's a screen with words. Where's the lens?

That screen is actually a sheet of beam-splitting glass, which is really just a fancy way of telling you that it's a two-way mirror. On your side, you see the words. On the other side, all the camera sees is you. We discuss more about how this works in the following sections. For now, you need to worry about looking good when it's time to go live.

How hard can it be? You read the words, your smiling and babbling face gets beamed all over the country, and your company rakes in a cool billion next year. Done.

Not so fast.

Reading and speaking are two different things. You're going to be doing one but wanting to look like you're doing the other. That's been one of the snags that haunts users of teleprompters to this day: If they look like they're reading, the audience will find it easier to check out mentally. There's something about knowing that you're not being talked to when you thought you were that's a turn-off.

So you want to look good, sound good, and come across as if you're speaking entirely off the cuff—all that stuff you learned in the last round of [media coaching](#).

Here's a few tips on the next page to get you looking and sounding like a teleprompter veteran from the get-go.



## ► #1 — Know The Script

Hello, duh? That tip almost goes without saying. Well, apparently most of the population has missed the memo. The sheer number of people that show up to read in front of a teleprompter without having seen the script is staggering but also expected—anxiety or arrogance is usually to blame.

There's something about [your neural pathways](#) that benefit from at least a preview of what you're going to be reading. By looking at your script beforehand, the teleprompter becomes less of a crutch and more of a reminder. Teleprompters are not immune to quirks and issues, so you don't want to lean on it as a crutch more than necessary. If your crutch slips, you fall, and so does your media appearance.

Plus you'll be more free to be natural instead of laser-focused on the words precariously sliding along a sheet of glass.

## ► #2 — Practice Reading (Ideally Off Of The Teleprompter)

Reading from a teleprompter won't be like reading off of a sheet of paper, so if you could get permission to be in the studio and rehearse with the teleprompter, that would be great. You need to do this days before the shoot where possible. If it isn't, as in our imaginary scenario of an on-the-spot call to speak, squeeze in whatever practice you can by reading off of the screen of your computer from a distance.

## ► #3 — Own What You're Reading

One speaker reflected on his early childhood when he was learning to ride a bicycle. He had a set of training wheels. He knew he was ready for the training wheels to come off when neither of them would touch the ground. If you lean too heavily on the teleprompter, you will sound like you're reading and that's how you lose an audience. Absorb, assimilate, own what you're reading so that when you go live, you're speaking from the heart and the teleprompter is just there to catch you if you wobble.

## ► #4 — Change Your Rhythm

Make a deal with yourself that you will change the rhythm at which you speak each sentence. Change the speed. Change the pitch. Put emphasis on key words of great importance. It's very easy to fall into the trap of reading each sentence with the same sing-song rhythm. Change it up to stay interesting and sound natural. Sound the way your [media coach](#) taught you to sound when giving a speech.

## ► #5 — Be A Little Extra

Be yourself, but throw in a little extra. Inject a little more energy than you're used to into your reading. The act of being on live camera mutes your energy, so by mustering some "padding," you'll be right where you need to be when it's show time.

## ▶ #6 — Befriend The Prompt Operator

Well, at least chat for a few minutes. Your time in front of the camera will really be a tango between you two, so if you can feel each other out and get on the same page, you won't lose each other when the words and the cameras are rolling.

## ▶ #7 — Smile

You're a human being, not C-3PO. Smiling will loosen you up and any gaffes or bumbles can be gracefully sidestepped with a smile. You'll feel much better for it.

## ▶ #8 — Eliminate Eye Movement By Formatting The Text

Unless you specifically order and set up the prompter, this won't be your problem. A good technician will already have this under wraps. But if you don't format your script on the prompter to be narrow, your eyes will move left to right and people will figure out that you're reading.

Another good reason to meet and greet with your stage crew: resolve these matters before it's time to air.

Now, that was your 90 mph primer. We're going to break the teleprompter down even more.

# WHERE DID THE TELEPROMPTER COME FROM?

Once upon a time, folks in front of cameras relied on cue cards to shepherd their thought process. Eventually this was replaced with a scroll of paper that had the script printed on it and mounted next to the camera. A technician rolled the paper for the reader. The whole thing was automated in due time to free up hands.

These solutions were good and well, but there's something about the camera that you can't fake looking into it. If your eyes are even slightly off of the lens, the viewer can tell and the simulation of eye contact is lost. The challenge was to get the words—and the speaker's eyes—in front of the camera without blocking the lens—this is where the teleprompter comes in.

## So How Does A Teleprompter Work?

The riddle was solved with glass. The prompt was mounted below the camera and a sheet of glass would reflect the image of the script to the reader. This meant that the script had to be printed backwards for it to appear correctly. The camera sat behind the glass and saw only the speaker who was finally looking directly into the lens. This is the core mechanic of how a teleprompter works. Every feature that followed has merely been a variation on this.

# HOW MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF TELEPROMPTERS ARE THERE?

## 1 Camera-Mounted Teleprompter

Odds are that this is the kind you'll speak in front of. If you're a speaker or a top-tier manager, this is what will get used for that outgoing company video message or that next orientation video. But they aren't one-size-fits-all. They need to be carefully selected to match the camera and the on-premises AV system.

## 2 Presidential Teleprompter

There's only one key difference between this teleprompter and the one we just covered: Where the glass is mounted. It's good for a president to have some eye contact, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, with the audience. So a presidential teleprompter has two sheets of glass mounted on thin poles that will reflect the president's speeches. When the president looks up and to the left or the right, he sees his words. The audience just sees their leader looking out at them.

## 3 Floor/Stand Teleprompter

These aren't much different from the presidential setup. The display can be set up at an angle on the floor or hung from the rigging in the back of the room. Not bad, but it makes the speaker look glued to the first two rows of seats.

No matter which teleprompter you use, all professional prompter software should be capable of reversing the text so that it appears normally when reflected off of the glass. There will also likely be a remote control and ways of starting, stopping, and adjusting the speed at which the text scrolls.

The really high-tech end of models will recognize your speech and scroll along with you as you read. The rest of the world's prompters are an exercise in pacing yourself. You don't want to read so slowly that the prompter leaves you behind, nor do you want to read so quickly that your pauses are excessively long.

# WHEN WOULD YOU USE A TELEPROMPTER?

No matter how great your delivery and subject matter, the absence of eye contact can strongly detract from the appeal of what you have to say. A teleprompter keeps you and your viewers connected and provides a safety net if your memory lapses on you.

And face it—long chunks of text are difficult to memorize for anyone. The usual tools recommended in [media and presentation training](#) such as PowerPoint or notecards can be distracting. With a teleprompter, there is literally nothing between you and your listeners. But the more of your speech you can memorize, the better.

## When Wouldn't You Use A Teleprompter?

Teleprompters are nifty and their makers know it. If you want nifty, you're gonna pay nifty. There just might not be room in the event's budget for one of these machines.

Another factor is the impact that teleprompters tend to have on the quality of a speaker's delivery. Even very capable speakers are at risk of slipping into flat droning when reading off a prompter. Unless you know how to read in a way that makes your speech sound improvised, a prompter will literally change the quality of your delivery. And then, sometimes, teleprompters are an event's SOP and there's no getting around it—The decision is made for us. Be preemptive and bet that you will need to know how to use a teleprompter.

## In This Case, Don't Read Between The Lines

Teleprompters are here to stay, like any product whose brand name has come to define the object. With video becoming the preferred tool for marketers, the odds are high that you will end up using one in a future media appearance.

As long as you make proper preparation—whether with a [media coach](#) or on your own—as part of using a teleprompter, you'll do just fine.





# 04

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## CHAPTER

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### **FILMING AT HOME:**

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO LOOK PROFESSIONAL

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How is it that teenagers filming at home are able to make videos and live streams that not only look high-quality, but also rival the aesthetics of million-dollar production companies?

The answer is that they are simply using best practices for factors like lighting and audio, while also making clever use of angles and editing. This is great news for businesses and professionals looking to make their own video content. Platforms like YouTube and TikTok have catalyzed innovation in bringing professional-looking video production into the home. Presentations, webinars, and all the other productions normally reserved for studios are now also coming from spare bedrooms and home offices.

So how do you get to that big studio quality from what you've got at home? Part of it is tech. Part of it is technique. Fortunately, technique is the bigger part. Read on to learn how you can set up a DIY home studio that makes you look and sound like a pro for any on-camera situation.

## HOW DO YOU SET UP A ROOM TO RECORD A VIDEO?

### In short, you will need to:

- ① Reduce all noise and distractions
- ② Find a reliable source of soft lighting (*explained in the eBook*)
- ③ Set up a clean, professional background (*or use a blank wall*)
- ④ Ensure you have a stable place for your camera

# GET SOME TOOLS OF THE TRADE

This is the tech segment. The nail is the smallest part of a hanging picture, but without it, you get nothing. Likewise, your hardware, your software—your tools—are the foundation upon which filming at home rests.

## Your Camera Set-Up

First and foremost, you're going to need a camera of some kind. You might already have a decent camera on your phone or your laptop.

For most videos, you want to ensure you're filming horizontally in "landscape" orientation. The only exception to this rule is for social media videos since people are more likely to be holding their phone vertically instead.

## You Don't Need Expensive Editing Software

It's important to note that there's no equipment that lets you make a professional-grade video on the first pass. If you're filming at home for a recorded video, it will require some editing and you'll need editing software. But don't worry, we're talking easy, simple edits, not avante-garde CGI.

Feel free to celebrate at this point, because you are alive in the heyday of open-source software!

For every exorbitantly priced software suite, there is a community-developed and FREE alternative. The open-source menu often rivals the commercial product, but you almost always have to be willing to put up with some bugs and laggy hardware issues. But if you can overlook this, you've got it made.

Whichever way you go, make sure you have essentials: Cutting and pasting. Transitions and subtitles. A selection of stock artwork and music is especially desirable. But these too can be found for free (legally) if you're willing to dig.

Sound artists that release music and sound effects for free get a lot of traffic that spills over into their resources that aren't free. In the meantime, you benefit from what they're offering to the public.

## Speaking of Audio

For the best sound quality, you will want to have one device as a camera and one device as a microphone. Say, for instance, you could have your laptop filming and your smartphone in your pocket recording audio. It sounds tedious, but it will result in the best, clearest sound. All you have to do is splice the video and the audio together later during editing.

This will call on you to mark the start of a scene with something that will both show up on film and be heard in the audio, like a clapperboard. Can't afford a clapperboard? Use your hands to clap instead. Budget, budget! It's important to note that both your phone and laptop are "omnidirectional" meaning they pick up sounds from every direction. Even plugging in headphones with a built-in mic can significantly improve the audio quality. Either way, this is why it's important to be in a room with as little noise around you as possible.

And it's not just a good rule for filming, it's essential for all [virtual communication](#) (from meetings to presentations) to ensure your audio is crisp and clear. We'll talk about microphone options later. For now, let's think about the setting.

You may find that the recording sounds too airy, echoey, or boxy. This calls for finding ways of dampening the sound by softening all the surfaces that sound bounces off of. How do we do this? Gather up all your pillows and blankets and get them against the walls and ceilings as best as you can. Okay, that's really rugged.

Sound-absorbing panels made of foam are relatively affordable. If your walls are white, you can arrange them in pleasing checkerboard patterns on the walls, adding to the visual element of your video.



## GOT YOUR SIX: THE BACKGROUND

What your viewer sees in your video is like a flower arrangement in a vase. When done right, some elements stand out and other elements have a supporting role.

Your background is definitely that subtle greenery that supports the bright roses—you. In other words, you don't want the background to steal the show.

If you have no budget, the perfect background is a blank, solid color. This can be achieved by hanging a bedsheet behind you, obliterating any other details so that the focal point is you and your message. If you have some plain walls that are aesthetically pleasing, even better. Just make sure that you are at least 7 ft. away from the background (or have correct lighting set up) so you don't cast a shadow.

You could opt for a virtual background. This is useful for filming at home if you're behind on housekeeping and you need to have content produced right away. The technology for making this happen has become more affordable and accessible. There are some very busy virtual backgrounds on the market, since professional presenters aren't the only people buying. Unless you're branching out into the rave/dubstep scene, an uncomplicated virtual background will suit you best.

*But what if sheets, walls, and augmented reality tech aren't options available to you?*

► **Film In Your Most Professional Room.**

If you have a home office or a similar “professional” space, that’s perfect as long as everything is tidy.

► **Tell A Story—Quietly.**

A few personal items in the background will humanize you. Visible titles of books on a bookshelf, for example. You could also use potted plants and artwork.

► **No Clutter.**

Junior’s messy bedroom might be the only quiet place at the moment to shoot, but the menagerie of toys, wires, and miscellaneous kiddery will both distract and detract from how professional you look.

► **Exile Fighting Children.**

Tik Tok might love to see you say, “And my fourth slide here clearly shows—Bobby, what did you just put down your brother’s shirt?!” But you’re trying to film a professional video, not an episode of Sibling Smackdown.

► **Don’t Use A Background That Is The Same Color As Your Outfit.**

You’ll be a floating head. Entertaining, sure. But also distracting.

► **Don’t Film In Crowded Areas.**

This is the one time you should take the “public” out of “[public speaking](#)”. Starbucks is a great place to hang, but a bad place to film. There will be far too many audible and visual distractions. Not to mention an inevitable joker that will sabotage your shot.

► **No Laundry.**

You’re proud of being a stay-at-home parent/professional and we’re proud of you, too. But stacks of folded or unwashed laundry do not make good costars.

► **No Glass.**

Is there a window or some other sheet of reflective glass behind you? There’s a chance that the camera could be seen. The audience has a subconscious compulsion to sniff out the “edges” of the seamless space in front of the camera. Seeing the camera is a major win for them and also a major distraction. Even if the window behind you doesn’t show the camera, this could cause a lighting issue. Daylight can be overpowering. A window to the outside directly behind you will darken the subject (you

► **Don’t Film In Your Bedroom.**

Don’t. Just don’t. If you do, make sure it’s not identifiable as a bedroom.

► **Be More Engaging Than The Background.**

There’s only so much you can do with your hands to push the background into the background. Then it’s up to you to step forward and stand out. This might call for [media training coaching](#) if free resources don’t give you the edge you need.





## WATT'S UP? ABOUT LIGHTING

Lighting is one of those filming elements that nobody notices when it's done right. Okay, there are many ways of doing it right. But there are a few ways that are ill-advised for a professional video.

Soft light is your friend when filming at home. As opposed to direct sunlight, soft light will make everything visible without washing anything out or blinding the camera with the whites. You can utilize natural soft light by shooting either in the early morning or the late evening.

Stronger lights will create sharp shadows, which is rather dramatic and distracting, unless you're paying homage to Alfred Hitchcock.

There are plenty of soft electric lights on the market if you have the money to spare. A table lamp will do in a pinch.

Whatever your light source, it's often best to have the light coming from the same direction as the camera, visible shadows are minimized and the face of the speaker is pleasantly illuminated. Hard, direct lighting either directly overhead or from the side creates harsh shadows that are not easy on the eyes.

# LOUD AND CLEAR: WHY A MIC SHOULD BE YOUR MAIN INVESTMENT

The quality of your audio should be a top priority when filming at home. Most people are willing to sit through a recording with poor video but good sound. But if your recording looks Cadillac while your audio sounds Go Kart, then your viewers will hit the back button faster than the screen's refresh rate.

In these situations, all the [best public speaking coaching](#) in the world won't save you because *no one will be able to understand anything you're saying*. That's why we want to emphasize one thing:

## **Buy the best microphone you can afford.**

No matter how acoustically great your studio space, if the microphone is of poor quality, your audio will follow suit. Good microphones aren't hard to come by and they're relatively affordable. \$50.00-\$200.00 will get you a microphone that is more than adequate for what you're doing. It can be as simple as a lavalier mic that hides beneath your clothes. It can be as complex as a USB condenser mic suspended on a shock mount.

Noise-canceling features are a boon to look out for. But less sophisticated microphones can be compensated for with the right audio editing software. There are, however, microphones that no amount of audio editing can redeem. Bear this in mind when making your selection.

**Get a pop filter.** These are very affordable, very small, but they make a huge difference. They let you get as close to the microphone as you want without making P's, T's, and other hard consonants sound like fireworks in your listeners' ears. You'll fall in love with your pop filter.



# EYES UP! HOW TO PROPERLY FRAME YOUR SHOT

Ah yes, what would your video be without a video camera? It would be a podcast. But anyway... Stabilization technology is a current thing and it makes a difference, and you might have the steadiest hands in the family, but having someone hold the camera will make your video look amateurish and upstage your speaking skills.

For stability, a tripod is one of your best investments. There are tripods that can accommodate cameras and phones both. If you're really on a shoestring budget and you're stuck with your laptop camera, don't fret... stacked books can be your DIY tripod.

So where do you put the speaker in the camera's view? You have two options.

**Dead-center** presents a look of symmetry and balance in the entire shot. After all, the speaker should be the center of attention. This is best when you have someone talking directly to the audience/camera.

Alternatively, you could use the **rule of thirds**.

Imagine that the view of the camera is divided into three columns. Instead of having the person talking dead-center, have them in either the left third or the right third of the shot. You'll notice that this is the method used by many high-profile media producers, especially in interviews. This method also creates ample space for captions and overlays.

What if the only camera you have available is your smartphone camera? Great! No, really. Most smartphone cameras are more than up to the job. But be sure that you use the camera on the back of your phone. The options and the quality are superior to the front-facing camera.

The only other thing that can make or break your video is the angle. You want to have your camera at face level with a 90-degree angle. This is the most flattering shot. It will be easier to take you seriously if the camera isn't looking up your nose.

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTI—OH WAIT THE MIC ISN'T ON

The deeper you delve into filming at home, the more you'll see that the things you need are quite minimal. There are infinite things you can use that are nice, but they aren't *essential*. That is, they shouldn't hold you back from getting started.

As the funds roll in, you will eventually be able to get that super awesome noise-canceling microphone or that light bulb that perfectly simulates outdoor light. But a lack of those things is no reason to hold back from setting up with what you've got.

Once you've got a functioning studio, your bigger project will be knowing how to perform in it, exuding confidence and commanding attention.

Now go find the studio you've got hidden in your own home!

## BONUS SECTION: PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

*Please Note: We have no affiliation with the companies and products mentioned below. We do not receive any commission or benefits from any purchases you may make.*

### BACKGROUNDS

| Low Budget  | Mid Budget  | High Budget   |
|---|---|---|
| Here are several sites with images that can be used as virtual backgrounds.   | For more consistent quality, these products are small green screens that block out your actual background and make your virtual backgrounds more crisp and clear. | A seamless is essential for those creating professional videos and/or doing live streaming events. The stands are free-standing and you can purchase different colored or designed backgrounds. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="https://www.wallpaperfusion.com">https://www.wallpaperfusion.com</a></li><li>▶ <a href="https://wallhaven.cc">https://wallhaven.cc</a></li><li>▶ <a href="https://www.wallpaperstock.net">https://www.wallpaperstock.net</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">\$50-65 - Webaround</a></li><li>▶ <a href="#">\$70 - Fovitec Collapsible Backdrop</a></li></ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">\$50-300 - Savage Background Paper</a></li><li>▶ <a href="#">\$105 - Impact Background Support</a></li></ul>                                |

### LIGHTING

| Low Budget   | Mid Budget  | High Budget  |
|--|---|--|
| A dimmable USB light can be a cheap way to give yourself control over your lighting and adapt it as your day goes on.. | You can get great ring lights for around \$60. They help provide uniform lighting for a crisp, clear image. | Three-point lighting is where you use three different sources to give you as much control over shadows and contrast as possible. Using a high-powered ring light and two soft boxes can help you achieve this. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">\$10 - Mudder Portable USB Dimmer Light</a></li></ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">\$60 - UBeesize Mini Led Camera Ringlight</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">\$250 - Diva Ring Light</a></li><li>▶ <a href="#">\$74 - ESDDI Softbox Lighting</a></li></ul>  |

Please Note: We have no affiliation with the companies and products mentioned below. We do not receive any commission or benefits from any purchases you may make.

| AUDIO   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Low Budget  | Mid Budget   | High Budget  |
| <p>A USB microphone is a simple and cheap way to improve your audio quality and reduce external sounds.</p> | <p>Noise-canceling microphones can ensure your audience hears you with a range of options to suit your presenting style.</p>   | <p>These microphones will provide superior audio quality, greater control, and features to adapt from an individual to groups.<br/>Tip: Add a mic boom mount for better placement and posture.</p> |
| <p>▶ <a href="#">\$26 - JOUNIVO Desktop USB Microphone</a></p>  | <p>▶ <a href="#">\$40 - Logitech USB Headset</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$40 - TONOR USB Microphone</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$46 - YAMAY Bluetooth Headset</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$60 - Hotec Wireless Lavalier Lapel Mic</a></p> | <p>▶ <a href="#">\$140 - HyperX QuadCast USB Microphone</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$150 - InnoGear Microphone Arm</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$200 - Razer Seiren Elite USB Microphone</a></p>              |

| CAMERA   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Low Budget   | Mid Budget  | High Budget  |
| <p>A webcam is an easy, cost-effective way to ensure you have higher quality video that adapts to lighting better.</p> | <p>You can get camcorders with streaming functionality built in. The higher price also ensures you can get up to 4K resolution.</p> | <p>Superior functionality and resolution make live streaming easier.</p> |
| <p>▶ <a href="#">\$60 - Logitech HD Pro Webcam</a><br/>▶ <a href="#">\$13 - Webcam Tripod</a></p>                      | <p>▶ <a href="#">\$250 - AiTechny Ultra HD 4K Camcorder</a></p>   | <p>▶ <a href="#">\$2000 - Panasonic Lumix GH5 4K Digital Camera</a></p>  |



# 05

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CHAPTER

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## **MAKE AN ADDICTIVE PODCAST:** TOPICS, TECHNIQUES AND WINNING TIPS

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Radio isn't going anywhere, but with an estimated [120 million](#) podcast listeners in 2021 and numbers still rising, it has some stiff competition from podcasts.

Traditional radio shows have to appeal to the widest audience possible and they have to compete with other shows for prime time slots. In contrast, with [over 2 million](#) podcasts in existence already, the number of podcast topics is staggeringly diverse.

Programs can be accessed at any time on a number of platforms. If you've ever fantasized about being a legend of the radio airwaves or speaking your truth to a wide audience of listeners, then podcasting could be for you.

The pace of modern life hasn't diminished the public's hunger for information. And while not everyone has time to read, there are plenty of people that have time to listen. Thus audio-based content is rising in popularity since it allows people to consume valuable content while they're busy doing other things.

**That content needs to include yours.**

## HOW TO RECORD A PODCAST

Recording a podcast takes hardware, software, and brainwork.

Before you lay down a single dollar for hardware or software, let's talk about the **brainwork** part—**scripting your episodes**.

Some podcast episodes are scripted from beginning to end. Every spoken word is in print and there's no room for deviation. This is both good and bad.

It's good because it means that you'll never repeat yourself or muck around. There won't be any dead air as you find your way to the next logical string of speech. But a 100% scripted episode has zero spontaneity. The spark of naturalness will be missing. If that's what you want, then by all means, proceed. There is an audience for such content. But prepare to be putting in long hours crafting and molding each episode to perfection.

A lighter approach, such as an outline, is popular. Something as basic as a set of bullet points could guide an episode along without the imperfections of winging it. This gives the participants greater freedom of expressing themselves naturally. There's room for spur-of-the-moment inspiration.

But this also ups the waffle factor. There will likely be more moments when you just don't know what to say next, and redundant speech is used to fill dead air. Overall, episodes are bound to be longer.

Most podcasters find that the solution lies somewhere in the middle. You could start off with a heavily detailed script and then trim your process as you gain more experience. You'll have to experiment to find what works for you.

**Then there's the content of the episode.**

**When your listeners tune in, they'll be hoping for at least one of three basic things:**

- ① An answer to their questions
- ② A solution to the problems
- ③ Some insight on their struggles

If you consistently deliver on one of those points, you'll have fans for life. The not-so-big secret is investing time and effort in keyword research (with an angle towards podcasting).

## Next Up: Choosing Your Equipment

One thing is certain about podcasts. You'll need a mic. A USB microphone will do you just fine if your podcast features only one person. But if you're planning on having guests or a co-host, then you'll be investing in a digital recorder with several XLR microphones.

USB Microphones plug directly into your computer and don't require any extra hardware to start recording. They're basic and easy.

XLR Microphones are the stuff of rockstars and audio tech professionals. Their versatility is endless, but you'll need a digital recorder to capture the sound for editing.

Why not just get several USB microphones? Your computer will have a hard time determining which microphone is which if you try to record into a single computer. Your audio won't turn out quite the way you hope.

Some digital recorders are specifically made with podcasting in mind. [This particular model](#) is an excellent example, allowing 4 XLR microphones at once and providing a few features that podcasters in particular would want, such as a sound pad for adding music and sound effects in real time. This is a plus if your shows are going to be live.

Are we out of the woods yet? One last stop: Talking about **software**.

The software, or the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) is where the music is mixed in, sound effects are added, and the overall sound is cleaned up. Was there a spot where there was 30 seconds of silence? Trim it out with the DAW. Then mix everything down into a MP3 file and you're ready to upload. Your options are many, but we'll talk about two of the leading software packages, **Audacity** and **Adobe Audition**.

**Audacity** is straightforward, powerful, and free. If you're just starting out in Podcast Land, Audacity should be more than enough. It's the choice of many professionals due to its quality. But if you have the itch to spend money on the upscale, **subscription-based Audition**, knock yourself out. You'll find there isn't much that separates them when it comes to podcasting.

## PODCAST TOPICS

Choosing your topic is a compromise between you and your listeners. If the topic is of great interest to your audience but none to you, you'll burn out. What little content you produce will feel flat. If the topic is of great interest to you but not your audience, you'll be making your content for an audience of one!

Here are some of the most popular podcast topics to help you get started:

### ► Investigative Journalism

As the public becomes more critical of mainstream media, independent voices are more welcome and trusted. You no longer need a degree in journalism to get out there and bring the news to the people.

### ► Talkshows

You could join the greats of talk media, like Oprah, Donohue, and Larry King. They each got started with that first show like you.

### ► True Crime

The world is obsessed with true crime and trying to understand why offenders do the things they do. If you can make true crime dramatic, informative, or even insightful, you will always have a following.

### ► Radio Drama

Audio-based theater has a long, rich history. It has experienced a renaissance in recent times with the world being glutted with movies and video streaming, especially in the age of Covid-19. Resources such as music and sound effects can be produced at home or licensed for a small fee. If you have a talent for voice work, you could be a one-person production house.

### ► Narration

Public domain stories and writings are littering the internet, and people want someone to read these things to them. Whether you write your own material or narrate pieces you find in the public domain, there will be an audience that is grateful to hear your voice reading things that they don't have time to consume on their own.

Your podcast topics don't have to be focused on entertainment.

If you're an expert on any subject, you can put together a subscription-based podcast that is structured like a home-learning course. You could hook listeners by offering a certain amount of information for free, and then reserve the biggest secrets for those who are willing to pay a subscription.

Don't forget that podcasts and videos are now a preferred method of affordable learning. College-level information is now found in podcasts and YouTube videos.

So don't just entertain—educate!

People are looking for content that will add value to their daily lives.

## Video Podcasting?

Sounds like a contradiction in terms. Yet an increasing number of podcasts give listeners the option of listening to the entire episode on YouTube.

Sometimes the video is just a static image over the audio. Other podcasters are adding elements like looped animations so that your eyes and ears are both occupied.

Still others have full-length footage of the recording session as it happens. It's a treat for those who want to see what studio production actually looks like and put a face to the voices they love listening to.

So yes, your podcast could be entirely based around YouTube. But you still want your focus to be how it sounds, not how it looks.

## The Most Important Factor For A Successful Podcast

What will ultimately make or break your podcast is your [capability as a speaker](#).

With readers, you provide the words and their own inner voice and imagination takes care of the rest. As a podcaster, you take the place of that inner voice. It's up to you to deliver more of the magic. How do you do this?

### **You speak like music.**

What's the difference between music and static?

Static has no variety. Its aspects stay the same. The same volume, the same tone, the same everything. Music has a variety of sounds and rhythm. This is the key to producing a podcast that is "music" to your listeners' ears. Our brains like variety.

# THE THREE PS OF PODCASTING: PACE, PITCH AND POWER

These are actually the three P's of *anything* involved in speaking, no matter whether a camera or a microphone is involved or not. These will sound familiar from the section on speaking in front of a camera.

## ▶ #1 — Pace

Pace is how quickly you speak. A fast pace can summarize, and a slow one can add weight and import. Pausing lets things sink in.

## ▶ #2 — Pitch

How high or how low your voice is. This can make the difference between urgency and calm when used in conjunction with pace.

## ▶ #3 — Power

How loud or how soft your voice is. Overusing loudness is not advised (unless your show is all about ranting.) Since podcasts are all about audio, these aspects of your voice take center stage.

## Storytelling

The artful combination of pitch, pace, and power is the basic building block of storytelling. If you're not a natural storyteller, don't fret. You can learn. This is why writers encourage you to read as much as possible. Like music, the more you listen to it, the more you get an ear (or an eye) for good storytelling and bad.

If time is critical, you can hasten the learning process by [hiring a coach](#) or taking an [online class from home](#). Even the most "dry" podcast topics rely on some level of storytelling to keep listeners interested.

## Value, Value, Value

By now, you might have noticed that the three P's can make any subject more listenable. This will save you a lot of trouble—it means that your success isn't just a matter of finding the most interesting podcast topics. You can take almost any topic and make it interesting with the 3 Ps.

If you're going to go to the trouble of making addictive content, this will call on you to be consistent in your output. You are now a source of information and entertainment that your fans depend on. They're staking a measure of peace of mind in you and what you create. If they're used to hearing a new episode every two weeks and you go two months without giving them anything, they will feel abandoned and will turn to more reliable sources.

In the words of one podcast producer, "Treat your podcast like it has an audience of a billion and treat everyone in your audience like VIP."

Find a topic, find a microphone, [find your voice](#), and you will find your audience.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Give A TED Talk Series: Storytelling**



# 06

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CHAPTER

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## HOW TO BE A GREAT PODCAST GUEST

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If you get invited to be a podcast guest, you're in luck—the show's listeners are a brand new batch of people that you could be doing business with. The simple fact that you're a podcast guest qualifies you as an expert in your field. How you perform on the show will cement that notion. So if you want to really connect with people during the airtime on somebody else's show, here are some best practices for being a podcast guest.

*Please Note: Moxie Institute has no affiliation with products mentioned/linked in this post and we do not receive any commission or compensation.*

## HOW DO YOU BECOME A PODCAST GUEST IN THE FIRST PLACE?

So do you just sit around and wait for a podcast host to reach out to you? You can, but there are things you can do to increase the likelihood that you'll catch a host's eye. **Leave a note in your social media that you're open to being a guest.**

**When podcast hosts are looking for guests, they have two questions:**

1

Would this be a suitable person to have on my show?

2

Would they even want to?

Your social media content answers the first question and the note about your willingness to be a guest answers the second question. Then the host can cut to the quick and ask you if you would like to be a guest.

There's a chance, albeit a slim one, that a podcast host will reach out to you based on the quality of your content. This is extremely passive—on par with a message in a bottle in the ocean.

If you're determined to be a podcast guest, then you're going to need more active solutions.

**Your best bet is to take the initiative to reach out to podcasts yourself and express your interest in being one of their guests.** Simple. Direct. Effective.

Either Google shows that you think you would be interested in appearing on, or find someone who is much like you in your interests and your content, then find out what podcasts they have appeared on.

For example, let's say you're an entrepreneur who specializes in growing nonprofits. Find another blogger that puts out the same content, then dig around to see if they've been featured on any podcasts. Then reach out to those podcasts. Hey. If they featured them, they would likely feature you.

Keep in mind that it's unusual for a podcast guest to get paid for their appearance on a show. The "compensation" is usually the benefits of exposure to the new audience.

# HOW TO BRING YOUR BEST GUEST GAME

You've been in touch with a host. A time and a date is picked out. There's now a countdown to going live. So what do you do now?

From your audio and video equipment to how you sound and present yourself, every factor will contribute to helping you stand out and impress. We say this all the time at Moxie because it's the #1 way to guarantee your success—prepare!

A well prepared podcast guest is not only likely to be invited back, but it will improve your personal reputation and may lead to even more opportunities. There's literally no downside!

We break down all the key elements below:

## Find The Best Microphone You Can

It's easy to think that podcasting is like radio. There's a brick and mortar studio that you can park your car next to and you go inside for the interview. Truth is, most podcasters with massive followings are based in their living room or a spare bedroom.

So you as a podcast guest will be using your own equipment in your own recording space.

There are exceptions. The crews behind some popular podcast shows always send a complimentary headset microphone to their guests ahead of the show. They would rather each episode cost \$100.00 than have lousy sound quality.

That said, don't skimp on the quality of your microphone. Remember, by making a guest appearance, you are being introduced to a whole new audience. You want to establish yourself as an expert in your field. You also want to make your host and their show look good. Bad audio nixes both.

\$100.00 should get you a good mic. You can always spend more, but you don't have to. Be careful of trying to go too cheap. You often get what you pay for.

The Blue Yeti is a USB mic that is usually a podcaster's first mic. It's easy to find on a retailer's shelf. The typical price of \$100.00 is sweet. It has a long-running record of use by YouTubers of all styles. Reviews are mixed on how well it holds up for long-term podcast production—it's good, but it's very easy to do better. It will do you just fine as a podcast guest.

Youtube has product reviews and demonstrations of any microphone you can think of, so you can hear any equipment in action before you make a final choice.

Try to pick up a mic with a cardioid pickup pattern towards the front of the mic. That way sounds from the sides and the back are minimized.

## Record in a Good Environment

First, the low-hanging fruit: **Do not record in public.**

There is no microphone that will properly drown out the din of people, traffic, and appliances. That coffee grinder at Starbucks sounds like a jackhammer over a mic. This is the easiest way to harm your credibility.

Are you going to record in a spare bedroom or an office? It's sure to be far less noisy, but still, consider environmental noises. This is where your choice of mic makes a difference. Ambient noises like air conditioners and outside traffic will either be minimized or magnified, depending on how wisely you spent your money. Microphones with a cardioid pickup pattern will pick up less background noise, but they won't ignore it. You can cut down on echo and reverberations by mounting acoustic panels on the wall or just hanging blankets. If you go with panels, many are being geared to appeal to your sense of interior design. Here's an interesting chance for you to get creative.

## Be Ready For Your Closeup

Video clips have become a big part of promotional material. So you should check with the podcast host to see if they want you to be on camera too. If so, you may want to invest in a webcam so you look good in any marketing!

As mentioned in the previous chapter, video footage of the entire recording session is gaining traction on YouTube. So your host is likely going to want you to be seen and heard. A good starting point is the Logitech C920, both for the price point and the video quality.

Speaking on camera could cause some nervousness issues that speaking into a microphone won't. This can be overcome with Fia's excellent advice below, or with the help of a good [media coach](#) who can give you personal guidance and expertise.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—6 Tips To Conquer Anxiety And Speak With Confidence**

## On Speaking Well

Your voice will play the central role of your guest appearance on a podcast. Getting your voice to sound good isn't an issue unless you're nervous. Improving your voice means improving your breathing. If you're nervous, then you're probably taking short, shallow breaths that give you very little air for speaking.

So guess which technique will help you out! That's right! diaphragmatic breathing! Recurring themes much? Hey, if it works, it works! So don't forget:

### Remember to use this diaphragmatic breathing exercise:

- 1 Breathe in for a count of 4
- 2 Hold it for a count of 4
- 3 Breathe out for a count of 6

So now your voice sounds great. Does that mean you should talk as much as possible?

An interview involves two people and two points of view. If one person does all the talking, then there is no exchange. Podcasts frequently suffer from this. The guest starts talking and doesn't stop.

### **You want to enrich the show, not hijack it.**

Keep your answers and comments clear, conversational, and succinct. If the host asks you a question, keep your answers short without being terse. This takes practice. Try to lay down answers that tease the curiosity of others. This engages both the host and the audience.

The host knows their audience, so if anything you say warrants a deep dive, they will press you with more questions or ask you to elaborate. Just don't go down rabbit holes on your own initiative.

## Avoid The Elevator Pitch

It's tempting to turn your airtime into an infomercial, but it won't go over well. Pitching your business during a commercial looks great. But during an appearance as a podcast guest? It looks tacky and self-centered.

You will sell your brand just fine by not selling. People already expect that you represent some product or service. A podcast interview is a "safe" way for them to feel you out. If the audience gets a good impression of you, they will be naturally curious about what you offer. People do business with people they like.

The host will leave a brief about your business in the show notes and that's where your leads will find you.

## Bring Some Life to The Party

Some podcast guests sound like they're being grilled by a drill sergeant. Relax. It's a conversation, not an interrogation.

You're allowed to laugh. You're allowed to be colloquial. You're allowed to use moderate humor. Robotic or rigorously disciplined speech will make you sound boring, unapproachable, or both. People want to listen to a fun and friendly conversation where they learn new insights.

The best way to think about it is you're talking with a good friend who wants to know more about your expertise. Tangents and side conversations are normal so don't worry about going off topic occasionally if it feels natural. The host will likely pull things back on topic when necessary.

## Project Your Personality

Nonverbal, visual communication is part of the "energy" of an interview. Well, during a podcast, assume nobody can see you.

So if you're a naturally animated person but your voice is subdued, you're just going to come across as subdued in the earbuds.

Being a podcast guest isn't quite as formal as giving a presentation, but the principles of executive presence still apply. You want to be engaging, you want to sound like you belong there, and you want people to know you're more exciting than a houseplant—all without saying it.

You can lay the groundwork for all these things before the interview takes place.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—Executive Presence: Be A Leader Who Commands Attention**



## Do Research

Two people can love eggs for breakfast. That doesn't mean both people will like them scrambled. The audience you'll be speaking to as a podcast guest might be interested in what you do, but you'll have to consider how you'll present to them. Do your homework and profile the type of people that listen to the show.

- ▶ Listen to at least two full episodes of the show. Get a feel for how the show host tailors the content. Note any special segments of the show that are recurrent. If it's in every program, then it's something the audience wants to hear.
- ▶ Read the reviews of the podcast. That's where people spell out what they like and what they don't like. This is the most direct way to feel out the audience.
- ▶ To the extent that you can, get to know the host of the show. Have a look at their social media. Talk to them if you can. After all, the show is an extension of the host's personality. The same is true of every book, painting, video game, and movie. Often when you research the creators, you can see their personality in the production.

## Don't Wing It. We Repeat: DON'T WING IT!

It's easy to think that as a podcast guest, all you have to do is show up and things will go smoothly. But bringing maximum value to the show calls on you to prepare. Without it, the conversation will meander and value will be scarce. So what, does this mean you'll need to write a script? No, but you will want to have a basic "survival kit" ready.

### ▶ Have A Few Stories In Your Back Pocket

The real gold in a podcast is storytelling. As a podcast guest, the host is going to ask you to tell your story so the audience will know why you're on the show. This is where guests will be tempted to ramble or do deep dives. Keep your story light to medium. The host knows what kind of meat to offer their audience, so if anything about your story calls for a deep dive, they'll ask more questions.

People don't tune in just to hear people chewing the rag. They want stories. So before the show rolls around, have two or three stories ready to fall back on just in case. They could be used as answers to questions or a way to keep a conversation rolling. Being able to roll out several stories on demand will call on you to take a close look at your storytelling skills.

### ▶ Consider Scripted Questions

This is the secret sauce that brings out good, deep content for a podcast. Yet it's often overlooked. Between the spontaneous Q and A, how about the host knows a few questions in advance and you know the answers in advance? That way any relevant deep dives are ready to go. The audience really gets value for the time invested in listening.

### ▶ Rehearse Anyway

Stories, questions, jokes—Whatever you prepare, make sure to spend some time rehearsing. Even if it's just reading over everything out loud at least 3 or 4 times. It will help a lot when it's finally show time. You will be mentally one step ahead of yourself.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Tell A Story: 5 Powerful Storytelling Tips**

## THE TALKING POINT IS THAT TALKING IS THE POINT

When the interview is over, don't forget to share the episode where you can. This is part of adding value to having you as a podcast guest. The show host will appreciate free advertising. Plus it gets you extra exposure.

Sure, being a podcast guest is a chance to reach a whole new audience, but it's also a chance to have fun.

That's how you'll reach the most people. Again, people do business with people they like. Make yourself human and likeable and the new leads will come.



# 07

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CHAPTER

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## **AUDIENCE ANALYSIS & EPIC CONTENT:** MEDIA APPEARANCE ADVICE

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**"If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own."**

*-Wes Nisker*



There are few things greater for your career and reputation than positive media coverage. Of course, there are few things worse than negative media coverage.

But no matter what situation or event points the cameras in your direction, how you represent yourself, answer questions, and communicate will often define whether you're destined for fame or infamy.

Our [media training](#) guide collates the expertise and guidance from experienced media professionals to help you maximize every opportunity and make an exceptional impression.

*Philosopher Marcus Aurelius sounds like he would be a fan of audience analysis:*

**"Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life."**

# WHAT IS AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

In short, it's a systematic investigation and observation, before a media appearance, that allows you to shape your message to appeal to your ideal audience.

This appearance can be anything from a recorded interview used in a print piece to a live on-camera situation—all valuable ways to promote your brand and create exciting new opportunities.

That's why [media training](#) is such a valuable investment for yourself, your team, and your company.

In this new digital era, how you present yourself publicly has never been more important—after all, the internet is forever! Media appearances are now all shared online and through social media so a [positive appearance will do wonders for your brand](#).

The keys to a successful interview lie in audience analysis and shaping your content, and the right [media coaching](#) can help you prepare for and tackle your next interview.

## Think About Your Audience Analysis From Multiple Angles

Every audience is different, so before making a media appearance it's important to consider who is going to be in front of you. Is it just you and an interviewer? Is it a press conference with a large audience? Your appearance can catapult your reputation and your company's revenue, so it's important to take every variable into consideration.

### ► What are their expectations about the event, the topic, and the speaker?

We all know how annoying it feels when a spokesperson veers off topic to promote their own agenda. Knowing your audience's expectations ensures they feel satisfied hearing what you have to say.

### ► How much do they already know about the topic?

Are they experts? The general public? Make sure to adjust your prepared answers and information so that you come across as an authority on the subject but not condescending or out of touch.

### ► What's their attitude like regarding the topic?

It's vital to understand your audience's feelings before going live. If people are concerned, you want to reassure them. If they are angry, you want to de-escalate. The way you speak about the topic, depends entirely on this.

### ► How large is the audience?

Small groups are likely full of similar, like-minded people which allows you to be very specific and appeal to them. However, the larger the group, the more general your messaging has to be to have a broader appeal. In general, the larger the group, the more formal the presentation.



► **What demographic factors—age, gender, religion, ethnicity, class, occupation, education, etc.—are at play in your audience?**

Consider who is being affected by the topic you are discussing. You need to think about the virality of your message. Will people be sharing what you say in support or in opposition? Making sure you've tailored your message to appeal to the right group is essential. Avoid stereotyping and take time to really learn about their current perceptions.

► **What is the setting of the event?**

This can influence both your ability to speak and the audience's ability to listen well. Consider the temperature, time of day, location, all of these will affect how you feel as well as the mindset and attitude of your audience.

► **Is being in this audience voluntary?**

That will help you determine how interested they are in your topic and how to create a first impression that will get them interested and on your side.

The answers to these questions can vary wildly based on the event, but you can ensure that your audience is always going to bring with them certain biases and understandings about you and your topic.

Along those same lines, what is the audience expecting when they listen to you? What do they have in common with you? Establishing credentials or finding something in common with your audience early on may be helpful. Help them understand why this topic matters to you and why they should feel the same.

A [media trainer](#) will also remind you to consider any challenges or misconceptions your audience may have about a topic. As the authority figure sharing information with the media, it's up to you to set the record straight.





## GOAL SETTING

As you conduct your audience analysis, it's important to set goals for yourself and for your audience. Consider:

### ▶ **The purpose and intention of your media appearance**

Perhaps you are trying to draw attention to a problem or issue. Or maybe you have established yourself as a subject matter expert in that particular field and want to improve your credibility.

### ▶ **What you want your readers or listeners to do after hearing what you have to say**

Do you want them to purchase something or accomplish something? Do you want them to change their mindset?

Any questions you may receive and possible answers you could share that will support your message and call to action.

Keeping both sets of goals in mind as you fine-tune your content and rehearse your presentation will help ensure that both you and your audience walk away feeling satisfied, and that your message gets out there the way you intended.

## CRAFTING MEMORABLE CONTENT

Our favorite strategy for structuring your content is creating an Audience Journey Map to intersect with the audience analysis you conducted. Along this journey, you'll hit three "pit stops" for organizing your content and bringing your audience along with you:

### **These "pit stops" on the journey are:**

- ① What?
- ② So What?
- ③ Now What?

As you prepare your script, think about your media appearance from the other side of the camera: what quotes, clips, or sound bites would be memorable or contribute to the story being told? You might not be the one conducting the interview, but you will want to come prepared with your preferred talking points and key takeaways to share.

Thanks to your audience analysis, the goals you just set, and the condensed nature of media interviews, you'll know exactly what points you need to emphasize.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—The 3 Part Structure All Great Presenters Use**

# THE SECRETS TO KEEPING YOUR AUDIENCE LOCKED IN

Media appearances and interviews tend to move fast, so you'll need to keep your audience hooked from start to finish. Think about the last great speech or presentation you heard. What kept you paying attention well through the conclusion?

The first secret, not to mention one of the main [media training](#) basics, is storytelling.

From TED speakers to CEOs, it's the best way to bring your message to life and make it both relatable and memorable for the audience. Think of ways to weave examples, facts, and data into stories to help your audience remember the key points.

And when we say 'story,' we don't mean you have to go through the trouble of making something up. Just ask yourself, "What story do I want to tell?"

- ▶ Is it your personal story?
- ▶ The story of your company?
- ▶ The story of how your new idea or invention came to be?

The second secret is understanding that you are selling your message.

Audiences may have no context or knowledge of what you're talking about so you need to talk about each point with clarity and in an engaging way. If you don't sound interested in what you're saying, no one will listen or buy into what you are bringing to the table.

Selling doesn't necessarily mean you want your audience to spend money with you, but instead you want your ideas to resonate with them and your takeaways to keep them thinking.

Selling to your audience is a technique that can be hard to master; it requires understanding how to be authentic and speak with passion. Ensuring how you speak will translate well on screen or in print takes experience or the expert guidance of a [media coach](#).



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—TED Talk Series: Storytelling**

## START AND FINISH STRONG

You have seven seconds to make a first impression on your audience: those watching and listening to you are deciding if they like you, trust you, and view you as an authority.

Most of this communication is nonverbal; it's what you wear, how you carry your body, if you smile and make eye contact. [Confidence is nonverbal](#)—it's the reason politicians and [public speakers](#) practice to exude confidence!

Let your audience know you're happy to be there and are excited for the opportunity to share your message on a larger stage. A media appearance can and should be an enjoyable opportunity to tell your story and make a difference.

As you wrap up your media interview, it's important to bridge your story: tell us how your story was important or how it relates to a larger issue. Finally, make sure you share a call to action: what do you want someone listening to do, think, feel, or say?



 [Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Establish Trust and Credibility](#)

# 08

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CHAPTER

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## **HOW TO ACE AN INTERVIEW** ON CAMERA OR IN PERSON

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“It is always a risk to speak to the press: they are likely to report what you say.”

-Hubert H. Humphrey



And that’s why, if you prepare, you can ensure that no matter what happens you’ll be able to adapt and stay on message. An interview is an exciting media appearance opportunity to tell your story, establish credibility, or provide insight into a topic.

Like any other [public speaking](#) opportunity, interviews require a certain kind of preparation that requires you to keep specific details in mind. But at its core, an interview is just a conversation that others get to listen in on and take away some sound bites. These tips, taken from our decades of [media training](#) experience, will help you ace an interview on camera or in person.

## THERE’S NO SUCH THING AS TOO MUCH PREPARATION

Because many media appearances are planned weeks in advance, you have an opportunity to ensure you know the crucial details needed to make a great impression.

Before your interview takes place, have a clear understanding about the story and what your interviewer specifically wants to discuss. Most experienced reporters will not work from a specific set of questions so before recording begins, you can reach out to ask something like “I want to be prepared, is there anything specific you would like me to address during this interview?”

It also helps to understand this from the perspective of the interviewer. Learning how journalists prepare their questions will give you a better idea of what information you should find out ahead of time.

If the topic is controversial or complex, try to think ahead about some difficult questions you might get so that you can prepare responses. A [media coach](#) can help you with this piece. You may also want to consider some topics that you don't want to discuss at all to avoid being drawn off topic.



**Here are other factors that are essential to know prior:**

### ► **Where The Piece Will Air**

Knowing how the audience will experience the interview will give you a clear understanding of how to frame your messaging.

Will it be shared across social media? Then you'll need click-bait sound bites. You may also want to share it across your own or your company's social media pages.

Featured as a blog post? Make sure you share useful knowledge to make people want to read on and learn more about you and/or your business.

Do they plan to turn the audio into a podcast? You'll need to practice your vocal executive presence so listeners enjoy the sound of your voice and are intrigued by what you have to say.

If you are doing a TV interview, radio appearance, or podcast interview, keep in mind that many listeners will drop in and out over the course of the segment. Feel free to repeat your main points throughout the interview so that you reach everyone.

### ► **Details About The Interviewer**

Confirm the pronunciation of their name and the outlet they are working with.

More often than not, you'll be speaking to a reporter who may not know the intricacies of your work, so make sure your language reflects that without being patronizing.

Whether or not the interviewer is familiar with your work, you can make background materials (like statistics or photos) available to them before the interview.

### ► **If The Interview Will Be Live Or Prerecorded**

If the interview is live, keep in mind there won't be any editing and if you stumble over your words or forget something important, you won't be able to go back. Rehearsing key messaging is crucial here as well as knowing to keep going even if you make a mistake.

If the piece is prerecorded, you may have the opportunity to redo. The editing team will have a lot of control over what airs and what doesn't, so think about the sound bites you will share and ask if they allow multiple takes.

### ► **If There Will Be Other Guests**

If it's just you, the spotlight is yours! Use your expertise to tell your story.

If you are sharing the stage with other guests, be sure to ask the interviewer for their background information and how your roles will interact. For example, are you all experts on the same topic? Are you presenting conflicting opinions or two sides of the same story?



## ▶ **How Much Time Will You Have**

As you plan your talking points, the amount of time you are allotted will help you determine what you can and can't talk about.

If you have just a few minutes, boil down your information to the most important pieces that you want your audience to remember.

If you have some more time, you can expand on those key points to provide more background information.

## ▶ **Who Is Likely To Be In The Audience Or Watching/Listening From Afar**

It's important to know who is in your audience so you can adjust your talking points and language.

If you are speaking with a technical outlet about your work, it's okay to use more complex language that may resonate better with your audience.

Finally, be sure to arrive early for any media appearance – even if it's remote and you don't have to travel anywhere! Preparation is the #1 way to ensure you come across as polished and professional so take as much time as you can to do it right!

These questions will help you make the most of your media appearance. As you plan and prepare, these videos have some more tips to look your best on camera:

 **Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Improve Your Voice On Camera**

 **Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Prepare For A Media Appearance**

 **Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Look Your Best On Camera**

# CONTROL THE MOMENT

It's normal to feel nervous or anxious about an interview, especially if it's very important to you or your company.

But in reality, an interview is just a conversation with another individual. The more relaxed and at ease you are, the more natural the conversation will be and the more professional you will appear.

But of course, that's easier said than done. It's important to know how to control your nerves so you can ace an interview, or any media opportunity. So try these mindset techniques to grow your confidence and resilience:



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—Mindset Techniques To Overcome Anxiety And Fear**



Another concept to keep in mind is that you are in control of the interview.

You were asked to make this media appearance because you are an expert in the field or can provide important insight. With that said, it's key not to place your own value or judgment on a particular topic, especially if the issue you're speaking on may be controversial.

If at any point you feel like your interviewer is putting words in your mouth, don't be afraid to say so before responding in your own terms. This gives you control over the situation and helps you specify exactly what you want to say and what you want viewers to know.

# ANSWER WITH SKILL AND DEFLECT WITH GRACE

When answering questions for a reporter, it's important to be prompt, honest, and straight to the point. Incorporate the reporter's question into your response to create a sound bite that the reporter can use in the finished piece.

Remember, less is more. This is especially key for prerecorded/produced pieces that will get edited later. It's okay not to have an answer for every question you were asked, but it's also important to be prepared with responses for those moments. This is one of the most important [media training](#) basics.

Be honest if you don't know something you are asked. You could say something like "I don't know, that is not my area of expertise" or "let me look into that and I'll get back to you."

Saying "no comment" implies that there may be more to the story or that you are hiding something. Remain calm, don't get defensive, and do your best to return the conversation to positive dialogue.

## Here are some alternatives to "no comment":

- ▶ *We are studying/evaluating/investigating this and will have a response at a later time*
- ▶ *Instead of commenting on that, let me point out...*
- ▶ *That's an interesting question, but what you should really be asking is...*
- ▶ *Let's not forget the underlying problem...*

If you are asked a difficult question or one you're not prepared for, there are two techniques you can use to redirect the conversation.

### ▶ #1 — Bridging

This strategy redirects the conversation to highlight the talking points that you want to talk about. You could say something like, "What I really want to talk about is..." or "I don't know, but I do know..."

### ▶ #2 — Flagging

This technique adds emphasis to a key point or a prepared topic of conversation. You may say "the bottom line here is..." or "the main point I want to stress is..." This creates a great sound bite for the interviewer to use later.

# WHAT'S YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYING?

Nearly everything we already covered about body language applies here, even in radio or podcast settings where you aren't seen. Why? Proper body language can help you feel and sound more enthusiastic.

## **It will fit a little differently in a media interview. Such as:**

- ▶ Smile where appropriate. Your usual relaxed face may read as unhappy on camera, so it's important to know what a more neutral expression feels like. To figure this out, record yourself on camera and watch it back. With practice, you'll be able to make it a habit and ensure you look good during the real thing.  
Avoid the habit of nodding your head to indicate understanding, especially if your interview is more combative and challenging you or your company's stance -- you may accidentally convey agreement with the interviewer.
- ▶ A good rule of thumb: change your facial expressions or gestures only once it is your turn to speak.

## **If it's an in-studio TV interview:**

- ▶ If you are seated, make sure you have good posture and are leaning slightly toward the interviewer.
- ▶ If you are standing, keep your arms at your sides. If you have a habit of fidgeting with your hands, then making a conscious effort to gesture while speaking or resting them by your side will help you avoid it. To help prevent swaying, put one foot slightly in front of the other to lock in your balance.
- ▶ Feel free to make gestures, but keep them small and directly in front of you.
- ▶ Unless instructed otherwise, be sure to speak directly to the interviewer or the guests. Maintain eye contact.

## **If it's a remote interview:**

- ▶ Maintain eye contact with the camera, not your own image, at least 80% of the time.
- ▶ If making hand gestures, be conscientious of what may or may not appear in the frame.
- ▶ If you are feeling nervous, think about the stability of the ground beneath your feet. Grounding yourself can help calm your nerves, and no one can see your feet!
- ▶ Avoid repetitive motions. You will probably appear in the frame even when you aren't speaking, so think about how the audience is perceiving you while you listen.

 **Click here to watch our YouTube video—On Camera Body Language Tips**

# YOUR TURN TO ASK QUESTIONS

Your interviewer will appreciate it if you ask them to repeat or clarify a question—so don't be shy! Your responses steer the conversation, so if you need a few moments to ponder an answer, don't be afraid to take them.

At the conclusion of your interview, you may want to ask when this story will air or be printed, you could also ask for the reporter to send you a link once it has been published. However, it would not be appropriate to ask to provide approval of the final product.

If it was a TV interview, whether live or prerecorded, now would be a good time to confirm the appearance of a lower third that may display on screen. Ensure that your name is spelled correctly and your title or company name appears how you want it to. You should do the same for a radio or podcast interview.

Finally, don't forget to thank your interviewer and maintain your media appearance persona until you are sure the cameras are off.

## And... We're Clear!

It's not easy to ace an interview on camera or in person, but preparation and [media training](#) can ensure you make a fantastic impression.

Any media opportunity is your time to shine; you're in control of the story you want to tell and what you want your audience to hear. Come in prepared, feel confident, and you'll be perceived as a personable, knowledgeable expert—who knows what other opportunities it can lead to!





# 09

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CHAPTER

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## **PANEL DISCUSSIONS:** EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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A panel discussion has much in common with improvised Jazz. The performers show up with a common understanding of what they're doing, but what happens onstage is unrehearsed, spontaneous, and revelatory. It's a display of expertise from different backgrounds that allows the audience to hear something unique.

The outcome is art.

If you've been invited to be a panelist or even moderate a panel discussion yourself, we cover everything you need to know to have an exciting, collaborative experience.



## WHAT IS A PANEL DISCUSSION?

A panel discussion calls for a group of professionals or experts to take the stage together and engage in conversation with each other and in some cases, the audience.

It approximates an acceptable form of eavesdropping on a meeting that would otherwise be invisible. What would you hear if these experts were together bouncing ideas off of each other in the boardroom? A panel discussion gives us a taste of that.

Also like improvised Jazz, there aren't any boilerplate GOOD ways of doing a panel discussion. But there are definitely best practices that make the experience more enjoyable for everyone.

So fine tune your attention and get ready to learn how to give a stellar performance on stage!

# SO YOU'VE BEEN SELECTED AS A PANELIST

**That's great! No, really. You have a chance to do something that could:**

- 1 Build your company brand
- 2 Cement yourself as an authority figure in the industry
- 3 Give the audience valuable insights to walk away with

Now which of those three things do you think is the most important?

It's the third. Without it, the first two things don't happen.

**If the audience isn't engaged or informed, they aren't going to invest another second of mental stock in your brand and they won't remember you as an expert in your field. It really is all about the audience or it won't be about anything at all.**

Why do people show up to listen to improvised Jazz? To watch the musicians tune their instruments and play familiar pop songs? No, they show up to have their gray matter tickled, their appreciation for music expanded, and to see what happens when a bunch of artists take a chance on each other.

That's what makes them create a special place for the musicians in their hearts—and memories. If you contribute to a panel discussion that excites the audience's brains in the same way, then they won't forget you anytime soon.



# PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL PANEL DISCUSSION

Surprise! You don't just show up to a panel discussion like it's another unstructured and off-the-cuff meeting! There is some actual homework! Doing everything you can to prepare before the day itself will make a huge difference.

Do thorough research, hire a [media coach](#), plan your messaging—anything that will give you an edge and help you stand out.

## ► Get To Know Your Moderator

Your first priority is doing a meet-and-greet with the moderator. They'll be determining the key you play in as a group, so the sooner you get in touch with them, the better. We cover being a moderator in more detail below.

You'll find out what the aim of the discussion is in the first place. You'll also get a broad overview of the kind of people you'll be sharing the stage with.

A responsible moderator will also fill you in on the nature of your audience, which will help shape your next actions.

## ► Get To Know Your Fellow Panelists

To the extent you can, get to know the other panelists. Talk to each of them at least briefly. You might have to settle for finding them on LinkedIn and reading their bio. But the more personal contact, the better. Here's why.

You won't be an expert on everything thrown at you. If you have a general picture of the other panelists' expertise, you'll know who to pass the ball to before you're reduced to "Um, um, um." That way the audience isn't let down, the discussion keeps rolling, and you dodge unnecessary pressure.

You're also looking to prevent provoking negative interactions. For example, if a fellow panelist doesn't like bringing climate change into the discussion about the future of business, the best time to find out is over chat, not after you ask them to share their opinion while sharing the stage in front of hundreds of strangers.

## ► Preparing to Contribute

It's impossible to prepare for every sort of question or every nuance of discussion. But you can prepare a few small things to present when it's your turn to speak. As a panelist, you will want to:

- Stay on point
- Observe the time you've been allotted
- Present a coherent message
- Dodge or defer gracefully
- Handle interruptions in a dignified manner

Each of these calls for a measure of preparation. It won't be as labor-intensive as preparing for a solo speech. But you will need to have a few things ready. How comfortable are you in front of a camera? It's one thing when it's just you and the crowd. Nerves can escalate when there's an unknown number of people watching from behind a camera lens.

There are methods of getting comfortable with this setup, including [personalized training](#). But it's also possible to prep on your own, your personal needs pending.

## ► A Basic Message

Your moderator may or may not brief you on specific questions that will be directed at you. The next best thing you can do is prepare some general, coherent information. Just pretend that you're going to explain a few things to an individual in the simplest terms:

- ▶ Your immediate job
- ▶ Your industry
- ▶ The requirements of breaking into your field
- ▶ Trends in your field
- ▶ What you know about the overarching theme of the panel discussion
- ▶ Relevant data, facts, figures

Don't faint... you don't have to be ready to give a speech on every single item. But just be geared to break them down in clear, concise terms.

Think of it as a verbal resume. Instead of getting hired, you're trying to be understood.

Unprepared panelists tend to shrink away from saying anything or they will ramble with no direction. Any seasoned [media coach](#) will tell you that the audience will be able to tell who came ready and who didn't—and to come unprepared is to tell the audience that they don't matter.

## ► A Few Stories

Remember, learning is relating. Stories are the fastest track to help your audience learn new ideas. They're packed with symbols easy to relate to what they already know. They're also the easiest way to hold people's interest. Therefore it won't be a waste of time to prepare a few stories related to your knowledge—either stories that you experienced firsthand or anecdotes taken from relevant publications or forum discussions.

Emphasis on relevant. This isn't the space for "Gee, a funny thing happened to me the other day..."

## ► Some Graceful Saves

What if you're faced with a question you can't answer? Or a question you don't feel comfortable answering? Or a question that is clearly meant to be provocative?

There are ways to douse these fuses once they've been lit.

If you're called upon to answer a question you don't know the answer to, just admit it. It's as simple as saying "I don't know, but I believe (Fellow Panelist) knows more about that than I do..." and hand the question over. No face is lost. Your modesty will be remembered in a good way.

Then there are the questions where you lose, no matter what you say... the ones that are fielded by bored fifteen-year-olds hiding in the bodies of professionals.

It's still easy:

- ▶ "What I'd really like to talk about is..."
- ▶ "It's important to remember that..."
- ▶ "I think a better question would be..."

And then guide the discussion safely out of the blast radius.

### ▶ **Don't Check Out!**

You shared your points, you used up your time, now the rest of the program rests squarely on the shoulders of the other panelists, right? Time to sit back and drift off.

No.

If the audience sees you checking out, they'll follow suit. Your fellow panelists will either feel slighted or wonder if they're doing a lousy job.

Sit up straight. Look at who's speaking. Nod at points that strike you. Basically, set the example for the audience. This will support whoever's speaking and the audience will be less inclined to disengage if they see that you're engaged.

## **BONUS: IF YOU ARE LEADING A PANEL DISCUSSION**

Congratulations! As moderator, you've been saddled with a remarkably interesting job! But so have Hollywood cameramen and lighting technicians, and you have something in common with all them: **You play a big role in the show, but you're not the star.**

*Read it again.*

The audience didn't come to listen to you and your vast wisdom about everything (and neither did your panelists).

## ▶ Your Role as Moderator

As we mentioned about moderators above, You are the rudder. It's a small part of the ship, but it determines the direction everything goes.

You are both **moderator** and **instigator**. You start controlled fires here and put wildfires out over there. That is, you ask the questions and raise the ideas that will stoke meaningful, energetic discussion.

But if you've got someone who won't stop talking that went over their allotted time three days ago, you'll have to gracefully shut them down and open the floor for other panelists.

There are ways to avoid such issues from the very beginning.

## ▶ Selecting Your Panelists

Your first priority is doing a meet-and-greet with the moderator. They'll be determining the key you. Suppose you were hosting a banquet instead of a panel discussion and you're looking for expert chefs.

You really want to "wow" the guests. So what criteria will you use to pick your chefs? Their ability to cook? Or their clout in their establishments? Oh, he's the restaurant manager's son? Get him in the kitchen, I bet his reputation will taste amazing.

Obviously, rank and politics don't add any flavor to a meal.

So in the same way, when you're picking your panelists, go with the ones that you know will be able to contribute meaningfully to the discussion. If there are recordings of past panel discussions with someone you've got your eye on, watch them. See what you're getting.

You want panelists that are as knowledgeable and as personable as possible.

Once you've picked your dream team, don't leave them hanging. Tell them the kind of crowd they'll be speaking to. Tell them who they'll be speaking with. Get phone numbers, LinkedIn profiles, anything that will allow them to get in touch with each other and get on the same page.

Basically, everything we covered above. The more work you can save your panelists, the more they'll appreciate you and the better informed they will be on the day.

If you have questions for them in advance, let them know. If you're opening the discussion up to some Q and A with the audience, especially let them know.



## ► Speaking of Q and A

Live Q and A between the audience and your panelists can be incredible and memorable. It can also be a minefield. It depends on the intent of the questioner and the dexterity of the panelist.

Having questions crowdsourced in the months leading up to the event can be a safeguard, allowing you to vet queries before everyone is center-stage. It would be prudent for you to come up with some questions on your own just in case the audience doesn't have much to say. This will keep the Q and A segment from becoming a staring contest.

## ► The Bigger Picture

It comes down to three basic elements in order to keep the ship of the panel discussion afloat.

**There are three basic elements are:**

- ① Intent
- ② Empathy
- ③ Focus



## ▶ #1 — Intent

Why are we having this panel discussion anyway? Answering that question early on will keep you from allowing deep dives down aimless rabbit holes. You'll want to answer that question from the perspectives of everyone involved: The panelists, the audience, and the organizers.

- ▶ Think about what the audience should gain from this panel
- ▶ Why are the panelists interested in participating? It could be:
  - ▶ Educating others in what they know
  - ▶ Growing their reputation in their field
  - ▶ Growing their brand
- ▶ Understand the core objective of the organizers such as
  - ▶ Promoting a product or service
  - ▶ Spreading awareness about something

## ▶ #2 — Empathy

You have a double duty to perform: directing the discussion in such a way that the panelists and the audience get what they came for. This will call for maintaining your empathy for both.

### **Empathy For The Audience**

- ▶ When a panelist dominates the whole affair, you will have to politely open the way for the other panelists to have a say.
- ▶ When a panelist is clearly going way too deep for the audience, have them reframe things more simply with guiding questions.
- ▶ "How would you summarize that for a conversation on the subway?"
- ▶ When the discussion gets off-topic or is no longer meeting the aims outlined in Intent, you will kindly shepherd the program back in the right direction.
- ▶ When a panelist could share more valuable information but doesn't, you will coax them with statements like "Could you explain more about XYZ," or "Would you elaborate a bit?"

### **Empathy For The Panelists**

- ▶ You're going to have some people in the discussion that are nervous. They might ramble uncontrollably and be unable to wrap up. They might not know what to say altogether. If you can tell they're splashing, gracefully steer things over to another panelist. "Well said, very interesting. Let's see if (Other Panelist) would like to chime in on that."

### ▶ #3 — Focus

We struggle to remember what we had for breakfast 3 days ago. So there will only be a few points that survive in the memories of your audience, regardless of how well presented the discussion is.

#### **Here's how to keep everything on track:**

- ▶ Well before the panel event takes place, prepare to do justice to 2 or 3 key points and discuss them in sequence. This is superior to discussing 10 or 20 points in a quick, sloppy fashion.
- ▶ Throw your panelists a bone by outlining the topics in your introductory remarks to the discussion. This will help anyone that might have forgotten their notes.
- ▶ Throw your audience a bone and summarize the key points at the end of the discussion. "Thank you everyone for that lively discussion of X, Y, and Z."

*Enjoy The Lively Discussion!*

Whether you're a panelist or the moderator, each of you has a chance to share what you know, grow your brand and your reputation, and give the audience a memorable experience. All it takes is a little preparation.



# 10

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## CHAPTER

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### **Q&A TIPS AND TECHNIQUES:** TOOLS TO MASTER

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Do you love the Q&A that follows your presentation, or hate it? If you're like most speakers, you probably fall into one of two categories:

- 1 **I can't wait to get to the Q&A** because I hear from my audience and we can at last have a true discussion.
- 2 **I hate Q&A** because I never know what people are going to ask and I'm afraid I won't know the answers

Whichever of these camps you fall into, you should be aware that question-and-answer sessions provide an excellent forum for persuasion. Just like you, your audience realizes that you haven't been able to prepare for questions you couldn't know were coming.

They know that it's much easier to prepare and practice a presentation than it is to field tough challenges suddenly coming your way in real time. Naturally, a person doing that well comes across as more persuasive.

Of course, you can and should anticipate questions and objections you reasonably believe you'll be faced with. But no one can foresee every question that might arise; and however well you prepare, someone in your audience will throw you a challenge you couldn't have seen coming.



## Why You Need To Shine In Q&A

So there's no doubt about it: you're at maximum exposure during the question-and-answer session. But your audience's awareness of that fact actually works in your favor. In fact, it can work tremendously in your favor.

Here's why: anyone can give a reasonably successful presentation if they've prepared well and practiced sufficiently. You can even give a good presentation if someone else prepared well and you've practiced sufficiently. Audiences understand, however, that during the question-and-answer dynamic, your knowledge and communication skills are fully and nakedly on display.

You can't rely on your notes, and you don't have the instant (false) credibility provided by your masterly PowerPoint slides. You must respond from your own well of knowledge and experience, create a concise answer that provides appropriate information to the questioner, demonstrate poise and good will, and do so quickly with all eyes upon you.

Do all of the above with style and skill, and you'll go a long way toward strongly bolstering your authority and credibility with your listeners.

## Why You Should Look Forward To Q&A

If you're in the "I'd still rather deliver a presentation than answer questions about it" camp, you may not believe that you should actually look forward to Q&A. Yet you should, at least if you want to positively influence audiences.

The truth is that Q&A is critically important to effective business presentations. Question-and-answer sessions give you the chance to enrich and deepen listeners' experience of your talk. That in itself is refreshing for both you and your audience.





## 4 REASONS WHY Q&A IS A TOOL YOU NEED TO MASTER

### ► #1 — Your presentation was confusing or unconvincing to the audience.

...Or worse, left them unimpressed with you as a speaker. In such cases, Q&A is your golden opportunity to either continue to inform and convince—or to do so at last as you conclude your presentation. Remember that speakers who handle themselves with style and assurance in the rough-and-tumble of Q&A may win over some listeners for the first time!

### ► #2 — Clarify your argument and give examples of your solution in action.

Most of the time, you're challenged to cram essential information into a too-brief presentation period. Because Q&A gives the appearance of being audience controlled rather than speaker controlled, it allows you to expand your argument while responding directly to your listeners "off the clock." The atmosphere created should feel more relaxed, while giving you greater scope to deepen your audience's understanding

### ► #3 — Q&A is more conversational and natural than a one-way speech.

All effective [public speaking](#) is conversational. Audiences want speakers to communicate with them honestly, openly, and in everyday language. Too often, speeches have the feeling of a monologue, delivered through a one-way dynamic to a polite but anesthetized crowd of onlookers.

The back-and-forth of Q&A should feel more comfortable to you AND your listeners. Best of all, when you're conversing about a topic you truly care about, all of your best qualities as a speaker will emerge.

### ► #4 — Q&A demands your absolute best.

Let's face it: A question-and-answer period is a tremendous challenge. You can practice your presentations to your heart's content—but you can never know what queries and objections may come your way when you invite your listeners to respond.

To excel in Q&A, you have to be 100% focused and able to think nimbly on your feet; sensitive to your audience's feelings and opinions; and empathetic concerning individual questioner's points of view.

Oh, and you must remain spontaneous, flexible, logical, and good natured.

Accomplish all of this—with a dash of humor tossed in if you can manage it—and you may surpass the effectiveness of your presentation itself.

# HOW TO SURVIVE THE 7 DANGER ZONES OF Q&A

Q&A is one of the most challenging aspects of [public speaking](#). Yet it's also one of your greatest opportunities to shine as a presenter.

Would you like to field questions easily, think on your feet, and marshal compelling evidence to back up your arguments? If so, keep reading! You'll learn below about the biggest challenges of Q&A—and how to cope with each of them.

## ► #1 — Hostile Questions

Hostile questions often reflect pent-up anger directed at you simply because you're a convenient target.

"I've been dealing with salespeople like you for 30 years, and I'm sick and tired of it!"

A response like that has little to do with you personally.

The key to handling hostility is to stay in control emotionally. Listen carefully to what is behind or underneath the question. Try to grasp the emotional context or underlying problem, and address yourself to that.

Always remember not to lose sight of your objective of persuading your listeners.

Your purpose is still to advance the goals of your presentation, not to demonstrate your dazzling swordplay.

## ► #2 — Loaded Questions

Loaded questions are exactly what they sound like: explosive.

And as the speaker, you are being invited to light the fuse!

Since loaded questions are filled with damaging assumptions and conclusions, your job is similar to a Bomb Squad's: to defuse the charge and bring the situation under control.

You can question the assumption behind the question. And here's an important rule: The more damaging the assumption voiced by the questioner (which of course the audience hears), the quicker you must refute it.

If that means interrupting the questioner in the middle of the question—that's-really-an-attack, go right ahead.

### ► #3 — Leading Questions

A leading question is one in which the preferred answer is embedded in the question itself.

“Isn’t it true that...?” is a classic opening to a leading question, since the questioner obviously believes that “it” is true.

This is a sweet deal for the questioner, since it involves asking and answering the question simultaneously! But you mustn’t let that happen.

Again, listen carefully, so that you can hear when the questioner has slipped in his or her own assumptions. That’s the time to recast any damaging assumptions or assertions.

### ► #4 — Hypothetical Questions

These are really “swamp” questions, since they usually lead you into a fog-enshrouded bog that’s impossible to find your way out of. So why go there at all?

The standard response of, “I can’t answer a hypothetical question like that” should suffice. The one exception to this advice is to go ahead and answer if the hypothetical situation makes a point you’d like to be heard.

For instance, when Condoleezza Rice said the United States would consider it “a grave threat” if North Korea tested a nuclear device, the Bush administration obviously wanted to get that message out. As you can imagine, diplomats and negotiators use this option in responding to hypotheticals all the time.

### ► #5 — Multifaceted Questions

This too-many-bites-at-the-apple transgression appears frequently, particularly among audience members who enjoy showing off.

The challenge here is that the many facets of the question(s), or the sheer length of the diatribe can make these interrogatories a real challenge.

Multifaceted questions can work to your advantage, however. That’s because they allow you to answer as many of the facets as you like while ignoring the rest.

If the question is long enough or convoluted, the audience probably won’t notice what you’ve left out!

## ► #6 — Fuzzy Questions

This one is an All-Time-Greatest-Hits candidate for TV interviews and radio call-in shows

When a questioner thinking is as sharp as the surface of a tennis ball, you should basically give thanks to your Higher Power, and take your answer in any direction you like.

You could ask for a more targeted question from the person, but why give up the chance to state your message all over again?

## ► #7 — False Choices

A false choice is an example of a fallacy, or an error in reasoning. Here's a typical instance:

"Look, we should use the foundation grant for either a new gym or a parking lot. Those are the things we need most for the school, and we can't afford both. So let's make up our minds!"

Why are those the only two choices?

In reality, there are probably at least a dozen options in such a situation. (How about a performing arts space, a new baseball diamond, an annual field trip, or a scholarship?)

When someone offers you a false choice, simply point out that there are in fact other alternatives, and then begin to discuss your favorites. If you find yourself facing any one of these tough kinds of questions, proceed slowly but surely.

Hesitancy can be as damaging as handling an answer awkwardly. Let your honesty and goodwill be your guide. Reasonableness will always look better.



## 9 TIPS FOR HANDLING A Q&A SESSION

Whether you run a company or are a one-man band, you probably talk in front of groups, both in prepared presentations and question and answer sessions. Whether it's a room full of people or just a few team members, properly handling the question and answer section will either enforce your message—or undermine it. Bungle an answer and you may lose the credibility you established during your prepared words. It's just as important to prepare for the Q&A as it is to practice what you plan to present.

### ▶ **#1 — Be aware of hidden agendas.**

Of course most of the questions asked by the audience are sincere and the asker is looking for a genuine response. But some questions are intended to either:

- ▶ Make the person asking the question look smarter, or
- ▶ Make the responder (you) look dumb.

No matter the intent, answer all questions with the same approach and professionalism. You will come out looking better.

### ▶ **#2 — Be prepared.**

It's good practice to write down questions you anticipate may be asked, especially the tough or controversial ones, and to rehearse your answers.

I often run through a mock session with some trusted colleagues. They always come up with questions that I didn't expect. Encourage others to evaluate your responses and body language. Fumble in private so you shine in public.

### ▶ **#3 — Pause.**

If you need a moment before answering a question, take it. A quick, snap answer can be doubted. Or if you haven't really thought through what was asked, you may answer the wrong question.

It may feel awkward—silence often does—but your audience won't think less of you for taking a few seconds to collect your thoughts. In fact, they'll appreciate that you took your time to consider the questions, and it won't feel like a scripted answer.

### ▶ **#4 — Be confident.**

Smile and look your questioners in the eye. The eye contact shows that you are focusing carefully on the question and the questioner. The smile is an invitation to friendship and connection

## ► #5 — Don't fidget.

Scratching your nose, excessive blinking, moving around, and other nervous ticks signal that you're lying. I know, you're probably not lying; you're likely just nervous. But perception is reality. Work to minimize these twitches.

## ► #6 — Answer the question. Straight.

This is a common problem I see in Q&A sessions. The presenter doesn't answer the question that is asked. It may not be intentional—it could be that they weren't listening closely enough.

Or, maybe the speaker didn't know the answer and decided to talk about something tangential he had expertise on instead. The reason doesn't matter.

Nothing erodes the credibility you've built with the audience or makes them doubt your message more than avoiding the question.

## ► #7 — Confirm you answered the question.

Occasionally throughout the Q&A session ask "Does that answer your question?" or "Is that clear?" It shows your audience you care and that you want to make sure their needs are being met

## ► #8 — Don't get thrown off by the awkward question.

There's always one, and it's always difficult. That person in the audience who asks a question that really doesn't match to the presentation or is just out in left field.

Handle this question as professionally as you do any of the other questions and try to tie your answer back to your main message.

This takes a little tap dancing, but it may be the answer you are most remembered for. (Remember President Clinton being asked 'boxers or briefs?' on the MTV town hall?)

## ► #9 — Practice, practice, practice.

Make sure you focus some of your practice time on the Q&A. Usually, it's the last thing you do on stage after a presentation, and it may be the portion you are most remembered for.

Don't give it short shrift.



# 4 WAYS TO RESPOND TO AN ANSWERLESS QUESTION

When "I don't know." or "Let me get back to you." doesn't work, try these four ways to answer difficult and unexpected questions without sounding incompetent and clueless.

## ▶ **#1 — Answer from your own level.**

When you're a leader or a manager, you might have a broad understanding of your team's work but not its every detail. But when you're asked a question that's a few layers down from your level of responsibility you still need to do more than just say, "Let me get back to you on that."

That answer is a surefire way to position yourself as a human search engine, not a leader.

## ▶ **#2 — Project your answer into the future.**

If you're asked for your opinion about a subject you haven't thought much about, you might stumble trying to come up with something thoughtful, or worse, say something you regret that you didn't mean.

In these situations, the key is to think in the moment and then immediately look forward from there, not backward.

Let's say you're talking about authenticity and leadership when someone asks you, "Superheroes change into costumes when they're going to use their powers. Do you think business leaders change into 'corporate' costumes when they speak in front of audiences?"

If you go backward and try to recall a previous example of this type of thing to reflect on, you'll get yourself into a maze of confusion, and you won't deliver a coherent response.

But if you stay in the moment, you'll allow your thoughts to flow forward with your speculations. This way, instead of getting tied up recounting past experiences—which may not even be a good fit for the question—you can answer more hypothetically and strike a positive, forward-looking note at the same time.

So for example, you might acknowledge how leaders might need to "suit up" to have the confidence they need, or point out that some feel they need to hide behind a "costume because" they feel like they can't be themselves.

Then you can say how you hope that, eventually, most leaders manage to shed those impulses and become more authentic.

### ▶ **#3 — Use questions about others to share your own views.**

Other times, you'll get asked a question that has nothing to do with what you've just said. Perhaps it's someone who isn't familiar with your industry or who has a different perspective on the issue.

I recently worked with an executive from a Major League Baseball team. He was speaking about increasing ticket sales when, out of nowhere, somebody ask him about a trade that another team had made.

Rather than just saying he hadn't given it much thought, he should've said, "I can't speak to what they were thinking regarding that particular deal, but here are some of the considerations we make when thinking about making a trade."

That type of answer turns an unrelated question about someone else into an opportunity to display leadership yourself.

### ▶ **#4 — Show gratitude for questions you can't answer.**

It's impossible to prepare for every possible question. Nobody's perfect, and every once in a while you're going to be asked a perfectly legitimate question that you unfortunately can't answer.

When this happens, first acknowledge the value of the question. Then be honest and explain that you're going to need to look into it more.

"I'm going to explore that because I think there are a lot of valuable insights we could gain by examining this area further."

They may not be satisfied with your answer, but this is a much better response than, "I don't know" or changing the subject altogether. By making it clear that you're committed to looking into it, you're showing that you care and take their question seriously.

Classifying tricky questions into categories like these helps you avoid panic and answer more analytically.

Just remember, questions are seldom just requests for information, they're also great opportunities to showcase your thinking and show leadership—even when you don't have a ready answer.

## WORDS AND PHRASES TO AVOID

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>"I" or "Me"</b>                      | <p>This presentation is not about you!</p> <p>Even though you may be self-consciousness and feel anxious, it's still all about the audience. Replace every "I" or "me" with "you," "we," or "us." Keep the focus on your listeners, and you'll serve them and you.</p>                                 |
| <b>"A little bit"</b>                   | <p>This is a phrase guaranteed to water down your content. "I'd like to talk a little bit about . . ." pales next to, "Let's discuss this year's important industry trends."</p>   |
| <b>"Just"</b>                           | <p>Similar problem as with #2. For instance, compare these two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) "I just want to say that I think we face some problems"</li><li>b) "Listen! —Our backs are to the wall here regarding these profit margins."</li></ul>                            |
| <b>"So"</b>                             | <p>Is this frequently the first word out of your mouth? Why? "So" indicates a continuation of a previous thought. Since this is the start of your presentation, what is there to be continuing?</p>  |
| <b>"Talk about"</b>                     | <p>Often used repetitively and monotonously, sometimes with bullet points:</p> <p>"First, I'll talk about our competition. Then I'll talk about why we have to think differently. Then, I'll talk about our new initiatives. Then, I'll talk about how I'm watching you all now shoot yourselves!"</p> |
| <b>"My topic is"</b>                    | <p>If you want to engage listeners immediately, you need to launch your presentation strongly. An opening that blandly announces your topic will fail in this respect. What's engaging about telling people something they already know?</p>   |
| <b>"I've been asked to speak about"</b> | <p>A variation of item #6. Sometimes an attempt by the speaker to seem important.</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>"Sorry if"<br/>or<br/>"Sorry for"</b>                          | Uh-oh. The speaker is apologizing for his or her presentation? "Sorry for this lengthy explanation. I couldn't figure out a way to say it simply." Okay, I invented that last sentence—but isn't that what it sounds like?  |
| <b>"That's all I have"</b>  | "And so I didn't give any thought to considering how to end this talk. So I'll just jump off this cliff, and take you all with me!"   |
| <b>"I'm running out of time, so I'll go through this quickly"</b> | It's probably not a good idea to announce to everyone your lack of time management skills in this presentation, wouldn't you say?   |
| <b>"Excuse the eye chart"</b>                                     | (Variation: "I know this slide is really busy.") Boy, haven't you heard that one before? Here, the speaker actually is apologizing for making a PowerPoint slide incomprehensible. If a presenter can't speak to everything on a slide in the time he or she shows it, the slide doesn't work. It needs to be boiled down or broken up into more slides, or the speaker needs to tell the audience that the full data are in the handout. |
| <b>"I'd like to start out with a story."</b>                      | Actually, this is only half-bad. A story is one of the flat-out most effective ways to open a speech or presentation. Its effect is considerably weakened, however, if you announce that you're about to tell a story. I call it "introducing the Introduction."  |
| <b>"There's a funny joke"</b>                                     | Well, there may be. But you're setting yourself up for failure if the one you're now about to tell isn't funny. Just get right to it, i.e., start telling the joke as if you're relating something serious. When the audience recognizes the humor, it will be that much funnier. Even better than all that: use humor rather than a joke. It won't contain a punch-line, but it's much easier to relate to your actual topic.            |
| <b>"Excuse me if I seem nervous"</b>                              | Although some people think saying this will get an audience on your side, I think announcing your nerves is a bad idea. Most nervousness isn't visible. Let the audience make the decision as to whether you look nervous. If they don't notice it, why tip your hand?  |

**"I'm not good at public speaking"**

Then go away.

**"I'm not a speaker"**

Yes, you are. Aren't you giving a presentation? Besides, you don't need to be a speaker unless you're on the speaking circuit. Just share what you have to say with us. We'll probably love it.

**"I've never done this before"**

You guessed it: this is instant death to your credibility. Again, do a good job and we'll L-O-V-E you!

**"I think I've bored you enough"**

Oh, let's hope you haven't bored your audience at all. And if you have, do you have to twist the knife this way?

**"Here are our key differentiators"**

A fine phrase except those last two words have been used a gazillion times and are now meaningless. Besides, your company's "key differentiators" are probably exactly the same as the next guy's.

**"I've divided them into 3 buckets"**

Unless you work on a farm, are wearing a pail on your head, or are planning to kick said bucket as part of the entertainment value of your talk, I would avoid the "buckets" cliché.

**"Bear with me"**

Typically said when the speaker is experiencing technical difficulties. We all do, of course. Why not have a back-up plan for keeping your audience interested if the technology doesn't cooperate? I tell my clients—and I really mean it—that they should be prepared to give their talk if they leave their laptop with their slides on it in the cab on the way in from the airport.

**"The next slide shows"**

Transitions are vital elements of your speech or presentation. They help audience members negotiate the logic of your argument. You need to think about how to organically link your previous talking point with the one you're about to discuss. Don't appear to discover yourself what the next segment is all about only when the slide pops onto the screen.

**"Moving right along"**

Truly the worst example of throwing one's hands up in the air because you don't know how to transition to your next point.

**"Obstacles!"  
or  
"Mergers!"**

Or any single word or phrase that you blurt out to indicate what you're going to talk about next. Find that organic and logical transition, per item #19 above.





# 11

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## CHAPTER

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### **CRISIS COMMUNICATION:** EXAMPLES AND SPEAKING ADVICE

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A single crisis can wipe out an entire company—if handled poorly.

On the plus side, a calm, measured response can not only save you and your business's reputation, it can sometimes even *improve* how the public sees you.

But because a crisis almost *always* appears in a flash, a swift response is essential to prevent or at least minimize loss of profits, increased litigation, job loss, injured employee morale, a ruined reputation, lower momentum as a competitor, increased government intervention, increased consumer activism, a loss of trust in management—you get the picture.

Welcome to the world of crisis communication. Your limits as a [public speaker](#) will be tested here.

We'll show you the how-to, and then we'll show you some crisis communication examples

## WHAT IS A CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN?

Unlike a business continuity plan, a crisis communication plan maps out what will be communicated to those who are affected by the crisis, including employees, their families, stakeholders, and members of the media.

The plan should be simple. Emotions will be running high and most of the people involved will be out of their element, so strive for a plan that is concise and easy to understand.



# HOW DO YOU PRESENT YOURSELF TO THE MEDIA DURING A CRISIS?

If you're the one appearing before a swarm of cameras and microphones regarding the crisis, the real finesse of any [media training](#) you may have received will come to the fore here.

## To Start: Ditch The Nerves

Recent times have downgraded how some leaders attempt crisis control to the level of slapstick comedy. Sweating bullets, stammering how everything is fine, no really—this is the modern face of trying to save face.

People will see reasons to ridicule online first and reasons to take you seriously second—no matter if your brand/reputation is the innocent victim.

So if you can get yourself under control, the more likely it is that the public will believe that you have everything under control.

## Breathing

That fear-beating, nerve-calming technique we covered earlier? Diaphragmatic breathing?

Yeah, you're going to need that now. This will give you the face of calm that you need to deliver your message.

### Try this breathing exercise to beat fear and stay calm:

- 1 Breathe in for a count of 4
- 2 Hold it for a count of 4
- 3 Breathe out for a count of 6

# HOW TO FRAME YOUR MESSAGE

You can't have too much finesse during crisis communication, and there's a wealth of examples of CEOs and spokespersons that didn't have it.

It's understandable to a point. After all, emotions are running high.

## Some of the *worst* things a leader can do are:

- ▶ **Get Defensive** - *"It wasn't our fault! We didn't do it!"*
- ▶ **Point fingers** - *"It was their fault! We were doing everything right!"*
- ▶ **Stay Tight-lipped** - *"We aren't making any statements at this time."*

All of the above are red flags that *will* signal the bulls of the media and internet to charge.

You're in a race against reporters that, in their best moments, want the facts—all of them. No matter how embarrassing or inconvenient. So if you cover over facts, and they're revealed by reporters later, it will make your organization look like they were trying to hide something.

In their worst moments, reporters will frame anything they find into a narrative that will serve their ratings first and your reputation second. It all depends on who is doing the reporting.

The solution, therefore, when framing your message, is to **think like a reporter**.

### ▶ **Be Transparent—Facts, Facts, Facts**

Don't couch the facts. Don't hide the facts. Don't add any dramatic or emotional frills.

Straight-to-the-point and matter-of-fact is best. If you don't tell your story your way, somebody else will tell your story their way.

### ▶ **Don't Delay In Making A Statement**

Speak first and you have a chance to set the tone for the narrative. If you wait for somebody else to speak first, you spend the rest of the crisis re-educating the public.

With those strategic lenses on your eyes, then you will proceed as follows:

## ► Thoroughly Research The Current Perception Of The Crisis And Your Brand

Your first priority is doing a meet-and-greet with the moderator. They'll be determining the key you Social media will cue you in on how your crisis is going over with the public. Beyond this, you can conduct surveys and interview people off the street, literally doing the work of a reporter.

To the extent you can, you want to craft your message to the people that will be hearing it. This is a skill that as much intuitive as it is analytical.

## ► Decide What Your Company Is Going To Do To Fix The Issue And What You'll Do After To Prevent It

YWhen Johnson and Johnson was accused of poisoning Tylenol, they made the internal decision to advertise the message that customers *should not buy Tylenol until further notice*. They then redesigned their bottles from the ground up with new tamper-proof features.that as much intuitive as it is analytical.

## ► Focus On Victims First, Then Carefully Make Your Defense

Johnson and Johnson was innocent of the accusation, but they didn't rush to their own defense right away. You want to be clear that your first priority is the *people* affected by the crisis, not the *profits* affected by the crisis (even though you're naturally concerned about that as well!)

When CEOs and others rush to make excuses or point fingers before they offer condolences to people affected by the crisis, it looks downright awful.

And then? Rehearse until you can stay on point in your sleep.



# REHEARSAL

A crisis is an emergency (duh) and the time to have practice drills is before—not during—a crisis.

Since you don't have a crystal ball to tell you if, when, or what kind of crisis you will encounter, there will be a lot of speaking that will require thinking on your feet. But there will be some basic material that you will be able to rehearse, the stuff that you bust out of storage at the beginning of crisis control.

Rehearsal of what's available to you will give you a solid starting point for the stuff you will have to wing. This is similar to professional actors who will tirelessly rehearse their lines and still look out for the possibility of ad-lib.

Speakers and presenters that rehearse their speeches take the stage with a boosted executive presence. They don't need to tell you that they're in control. You can hear it in their voice and see it in the way that they move. Rehearsing what you can for a situation of crisis control will give you the same boost.



## PAST EXAMPLES

There is no shortage of crisis communication examples of companies, organizations, and high-profile individuals coming to rescue a reputation in flames.

Sometimes the crisis occurs at the bottom level. Employees have a moment of poor judgment or someone launches a smear campaign and the CEO has to find out about it all after the fact.

Sometimes the top-level management starts the problem. Regardless of where and how the problem started, here are crisis communication examples that involve speaking to the media.

The focus for the sake of this guide is **how** these people spoke, not **what** they spoke or if they were tone-deaf in their message or not.



## ► United Airlines

In 2019, an innocent doctor was dragged off of an overbooked United Airlines flight while screaming and injured. Though this happened at the hands of unscrupulous employees, the incident tarnished the image of the entire company overnight.



**Click here to watch the YouTube video—CEO of United Airlines Publicly Apologizing**

| The Good  | The Bad  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ No stammering or stuttering</li><li>▶ No verbal crutches like “err, “umm”, “uhh” etc.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Subdued voice</li><li>▶ Frequently looks at notes</li><li>▶ Looks small, shrinking</li><li>▶ Can’t feel any executive presence</li></ul> |

The same CEO is interviewed on the news and it’s a great example of what not to do in crisis communication.



**Click here to watch the YouTube video—Example Of CEO of United Airlines Interview**

- ▶ Constantly averting eyes
- ▶ Interrupts anchor
- ▶ Still shrinking, becoming small

## ► Jet Blue

On the other side of the field, here’s an apology that went over rather well. JetBlue had an operational stumble after an ice storm that left many customers stranded on a tarmac.

The CEO took to social media to convey an apology and a detailed plan of how things were going to be done so that the incident wouldn’t be repeated. The **content** is notably nice, but how about the **delivery**?



**Click here to watch the YouTube video—CEO of Jet Blue Publicly Apologizing**

| The Good  | The Bad  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Consistent eye contact</li><li>▶ Animated delivery, lots of gestures</li><li>▶ Some pauses</li><li>▶ Facial expressions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Some stammering</li><li>▶ A noticeable volume of verbal crutches</li><li>▶ No vocal modulation</li></ul> |

## ► Robinhood

The world will not soon forget Robinhood, the commission-free trading app. When certain stocks were hot, users found that the app functionality was suddenly limited. This led to the accusation that Robinhood was protecting the hedge funds of the wealthy. The CEO of Robinhood weighed in on the matter. Some say he did really good, others say he did really bad. But forget the message—what about the quality of his presentation itself?



**Click here to watch the Forbes video—CEO of Robinhood Addressing The Crisis**

| The Good  | The Bad   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>► Very good eye contact</li><li>► Good vocal modulation</li><li>► Variety in his pacing at key points</li><li>► Some facial expressions. Not deadpan.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>► Palpably scripted feel</li><li>► Wasn't able to adapt his speaking for the moderator in real-time</li><li>► Q+A could have disrupted his composure.</li></ul> |

### *Preparation Wins Everytime*

Hopefully, none of this is advice that you'll ever have to take.

But if you are ever met with a PR crisis, *how* you speak will carry just as much weight as *what* you speak.



# 12

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## CHAPTER

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# **FROM ANXIOUSNESS TO CONFIDENCE:**

## HOW TO SPEAK ON CAMERA LIKE A PRO

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Speaking in front of others is enough to cause many people anxiety. And speaking to a live audience on camera? That's where extra anxiousness can hit you hard! But, why?

I mean come on—it's just a camera. It doesn't have sharp teeth. It's not carrying a gun. It isn't trying to sell you life insurance.

Depending on the setup, you might not be able to see your audience at all like you could in a Zoom meeting. Since you can't see all the nonverbal feedback that would come from an audience, you have no idea how your presentation is going over. You can't see anyone leaning forward in their seats to hear more, you can't see anyone ducking down to check their email. You can't see laughs or frowns or anything. That great unknown might be the biggest cause of your anxiousness.

Many of us are fine with staying out of the spotlight and doing our own thing away from prying eyes. [Public speaking](#) puts us in front of many eyes and many minds that make many judgments.

Being in a situation where we're being seen and judged by many people can be a trial of nerves as is. But to be in front of so many eyes and have no clue how we're doing? It can feel like stumbling down a dark alleyway in the middle of the night looking for your hotel.

The good news is that managing anxiousness in front of a camera is the same as managing anxiousness in front of an audience. Speaking is speaking. Be it before a crowd or camcorder, you have a message to get across.

It's one thing to minimize the anxiousness you feel. But you also want to feel and exude more confidence too—this guide will teach you how to do both!

# HOW DO YOU SPEAK CONFIDENTLY ON CAMERA?

So you want to speak on camera with confidence!

Confidence in what?

The opposite of speaking with confidence is a speaker that is full of uncertainty—they have no faith in their message or their ability to deliver it.

Speaking with confidence gives you a speaker whose entire bearing says *I belong up here and what I have to say is important.*

Here are practical and punchy tips for being a confident speaker while the camera is rolling.

## ▶ Aim to Serve

Note that speaking with confidence doesn't mean thinking, *I'm a rockstar and you owe me your attention.*

Building that camera-ready confidence is the opposite of building your ego. A big step towards upping your confidence game is **internally taking a step down** to the role of messenger.

Yes, you're in the spotlight, but your purpose there is to serve. You have something important to deliver to the people listening and that's where their attention should go. That awareness will take some of the pressure off of you.

## ▶ Dress For The Part

You'll have an easier time sounding like you belong in front of the camera if you also look the part.

You don't have to wear a suit or a ballroom gown (not that we're going to stop you). But you also don't want to look like you just woke up and threw on some pajamas. Taking this extra measure benefits both you and your audience.

The more confidently you dress, the more confident you'll automatically feel. The added bonus is that your confident appearance will get you more credibility with your audience. To guarantee this, try to dress one level above your audience.

On that note, even if you look proper and dignified enough, Your outfit could cause technical problems for the camera, so take care that your clothing isn't an extreme shade of a color, such as yellow or red. You'll look like a flaming torch through the camera.

Also make sure that your outfit doesn't have any distracting patterns that could make the audience spend more time figuring out what those purple hippos in the print are juggling than listening to your presentation.

There are even some patterns that, while tame, will dance when in front of a camera. So be careful.

## ► No Staring Into Souls

Since maintaining eye contact with people is a way of keeping people engaged, that means you should stare directly into the camera from start to finish of your presentation, right?

Wrong.

A good rule of thumb is that when you are speaking to the audience, that's when you should look into the lens. But if your eyes truly stay locked on the camera the entire time, people are going to wonder what's wrong with you. Because nobody does that when it's one-on-one. Not unless they're a love-struck high schooler.

Don't be afraid to glance off-camera thoughtfully, to look to the side or somewhere else as you find a thought. It's what you do in the absence of a camera, so it feels more natural for you and the audience—doing this will help those nerves settle .

But when you do look into the camera, there's a best practice for that as well...

A camera lens has more to see than you think. There are flares and colors and... whose reflection is that? Mine? Oh cool. If I move left, my reflection moves right—

Yeah, it's a distraction. But you can still give that illusion of eye contact by directing your general gaze at the camera. Think of it as looking at the ocean with the intent to see the water but not focus on an individual wave.

Speaking of distractions

## ► Don't Dance

Try not to move around or bounce too much. Your viewers will wonder if you forgot to use the bathroom before you started presenting. You're a presenter, not a moving target at the county fair. If you're swaying side to side you will literally feel *unstable* which will translate into your delivery too.

The best thing to do is plant your feet firmly on the ground, legs hip-width apart, and *relax* into that stance. You will feel more grounded and this will help you feel more calm.

## ► Rehearse, But Not Too Much

We touch on rehearsal in this guide but it's important enough to repeat. You don't want to neglect practice, but don't try and remember every word and line of your script either.

If you focus only on memorizing everything, you run the risk of leaving your game in the locker room, so to speak. You want to be able to have plenty of energy and spontaneity for the actual performance.

Each of these ideas can be shrunk down to one common denominator: reduce all distractions from the message you're there to deliver. That goes for both sides. If you're not distracted, you'll deliver better. If your audience isn't distracted, they'll listen better.



# THE TAO OF THE FEAR OF SPEAKING

Back to the matter of anxiousness. In the moment that you feel butterflies tickling the inside of your stomach, you share something in common with every single public speaker, past and present—**nervousness strikes every speaker before every presentation. No exceptions.**

Are we trying to say that JFK, Martin Luther-King Jr., Winston Churchill, and everyone else that has ever taken the stage—they all brought a little anxiousness with them?

Yes.

Every TED speaker that you've seen dazzle the audience did so with a gnawing anxiousness and nervousness at their heels.

A famous line used in many acting schools is

“If you don't feel nervous, you're dead.”

Our point is this: Get past the notion of getting rid of anxiousness or nervousness before speaking. It's not only unrealistic, it's discouraging. It's also unnecessary. The hard of hearing don't wait to be cured before trying to communicate with others. So in the same way, anyone with anxiety who is scared of speaking in front of others still needs to try and accept that nerves are part of the experience. We all find a way to function despite our difficulties. Anxiousness over [public speaking](#) is no different. It can't be eliminated, but it can be minimized to the point that you barely notice it.

**You're not aspiring to be fearless, but to fear less.**



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—Fear Less: Using The Fear of Failure To Pursure Your Passion**

# DO YOU HAVE TO MEMORIZE YOUR PRESENTATION?

Is it possible to memorize a presentation word for word? Yes. Is it practical? Not for most of us. Being able to recite your presentation verbatim will actually detract from the quality of it. It's the same reason that having a manuscript presentation could take the quality down a notch. A manuscript adds the extra workload of getting every. Single. Word. Right.

Being focused on the words shifts your attention away from the more important aspects, like enthusiasm and vocal variety. So if you've got this mental manuscript, too much of your energy is going to be allocated to getting each word exactly right. You'll trip when you reach a moment when you aren't sure which words you had set in stone.

Instead, try "memorizing" your presentation the way most folks giving driving directions. If someone asks you how to get to Location XYZ, you don't tell them every single house, street, dog, face, sign, and building they will come across. Instead, you list significant landmarks and critical junctures, like where they need to turn. Most people can find their way with such basic information.

Likewise, you'll save time and energy if you memorize an outline of your presentation. You'll still be able to find your way, and you'll have the bandwidth for making the presentation interesting since you won't be so hung up on precise wording.

## ► Rehearse for Certainty

Oh, the irony. Nobody wants to struggle with anxiousness while speaking on camera. Rehearsal bites a huge chunk out of that anxiousness, but rehearsal is hand-waved away by so many speakers.

"I'm better up there when I wing it." Oh yeah? That's like saying that actors are better when they don't rehearse. Or acrobats. Or tightrope walkers. Or musicians. **Rehearsal is crucial to everyone involved in art, and speaking is an art.**

## ► Get Help

Sometimes there's no substitute for someone to show you how it's done. It's one thing to read about it and theorize. It's another to have a [speaking coach](#) demonstrate each point and tailor them to your personality.

## ► How to Calm Down

Your mind and your body feed off of each other when it comes to anxiety. There are methods for calming down either side, which will go a long way towards a complete state of relaxation.

**Remember: Everyone that has to appear in front of a camera—actors, anchors, speakers, they all step in front of that camera with a measure of nervousness.** Each appearance in front of a camera represents swimming against the current.



**Click here to watch our YouTube video—Why Practice Is Important**

# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES: THE BODY

The mind/body connection is pretty much a widely accepted science by now.

So if you relax the body, you're halfway there to relaxing the mind. And vice versa. This first technique is the holy grail of relaxation for public speakers, Broadway performers, and even soldiers in the heat of battle.

## ► Diaphragmatic Breathing

Breathe in for a count of four, hold for a count of four, and exhale for a count of six. This ensures that your breathing is slow and full. The more you do this, the more you will notice your heartbeat slowing down and your anxiety levels lowering. Your body is no longer starved for oxygen, which is vital for thinking while you're speaking—and for giving your voice more power.

## ► Stretching

It's not quite as involved as diaphragmatic breathing, but it is still effective. You might not have time to sneak in some breathing exercises, but stretching will only take a few seconds.

Do this exactly the way you see it in the cartoons when the character first wakes up in the morning. Take a long, deep stretch and a breath to go with it. You'll be surprised at just how calming this is.

If you do have more time though, stretching and exercise are both fantastic ways to get nerves out and reduce your anxiety.



 [Click here to watch our YouTube video—How To Stay Calm Under Pressure](#)

# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES: THE MIND

Perhaps you prefer to do your calming protocol from the inside out. That's just fine. What you do for the mind will spread to the body.

## ► Laughter

Laughter has often been appraised as a full-body full body exercise. There are both aerobic and anaerobic aspects to it that improve your overall feeling of well-being. In this age of the internet, there's no shortage of jokes, skits, and memes on the internet they can deliver a quick injection of hardy har har.

But what if the last thing you can think about at the moment is laughing? Well, good news. You can fake laughing and your body will eventually adopt it as the genuine thing. Just as we cover in visualization next, your senses and your brain do not know the difference between the fake and the genuine. There are entire laugh therapy groups where the session starts with a lot of fake laughing. And by the end of the session, the participants are actually in stitches.

## ► Visualization

This point about visualization belongs under the heading of rehearsal, but that might be too confusing. Just as your body responds to a fake laugh the same way it responds to a genuine laugh, so your brain reacts to a mental visualization the same way it reacts to an actual visual.

By visualizing yourself getting in front of the camera and giving a stellar presentation, you are actually rehearsing for success. If you take the time to picture not only how you will look as you give your presentation, but also how you will feel as you roll out a confident delivery, your brain builds the road map for doing the actual thing in real life. [Visualization works](#), and it's a dependable method of rehearsal for many athletes and public figures whose income depends on their success.



# WHEN YOU CAN'T CALM DOWN—TURNING ANXIETY INTO EXCITEMENT

Trying to relax before speaking in front of a camera might feel like swimming upstream. Is there an easier way? Yes. But it will take some readjustment of your mindset.

The traditional approach is to eliminate as much of your anxiety as you can before you have to speak. Since that anxiety isn't going anywhere, why not find a way to make it work instead of making it leave?

Calm is the opposite of anxiety, so you find yourself in conflict when you try to calm down. Excitement, however, is a close cousin of anxiety. It's just connected to more positive emotions.

Think about it.

## Anxiety and excitement are both:

- ▶ *Heightened states of arousal*
- ▶ *Signal the brain for increased levels of cortisol*
- ▶ *Prepare the body for action*

See how much of the hard work is taken out of the equation? By simply flipping from anxiety to excitement, you move from a threat mindset to an opportunity mindset. Your physical state has not changed at all, but now all that energy is an asset and not an obstacle. You stand a much better chance of doing better without having to manage your heightened state. You're surfing the wave, not swimming against it, and the view from up there is amazing!

It can be as simple as telling yourself three little words: "I am excited!"

So how is it possible to get such different results from the same physical state?

## There are three components to every emotion:

- 1 How our bodies react to it
- 2 How we express it
- 3 How we experience it

The components of good or bad? Those are labels supplied by us. This is shown in the way that two situations can be judged very differently, even though they have a lot in common.



An athlete hears the starting gun and processes it as excitement. The adrenaline floods their system and they go all in because they know there's a reward at the end of their task. Someone that has to give a presentation in front of a camera sees the green light turn on and just feels anxious and nervous—despite a good performance also having its own rewards.

But why?

Both situations involve being observed and judged by others.

Both situations add a lot of weight to both success and failure.

The difference, then, isn't in the situations. It's in how we personally feel about the situations. It's the way the circumstances are framed in our heads.

**You might find that the answer to your nervousness isn't resisting it, but reframing it.**

When you feel that nervous gut feeling coming on, and the negative self-talk coming out of the woodwork, that's your chance to flip it into something positive.

As you approach the situation where you'll be speaking in front of the camera and you hear that negative self-talk, "I'm all nerves. I'm going to make a mess of the presentation and a mess of my reputation at the same time."

Flip/reframe it as something more like, "I'm all excited. I'm going to channel this extra energy into speaking loud and proud. I'm super-hyped over the opportunities this will bring!"

It seems too simple. But small things make huge differences. The flip of a small light switch can illuminate an entire building. The flip of a small thought can brighten your frame of mind and state of being.





## READY FOR YOUR CLOSE UP?

If none of these tips make the impact you're looking for, it may be necessary to seek help from a professional [speaking coach](#). Guides like this are one-size-fits-all. Professional training is tailored to what you—and only you—need to have a breakthrough.

You may not know how many people are watching you while you are speaking and you don't know how many more will watch the recording. That's a source of anxiousness outside of your influence. But there's a lot you can do to control your anxiousness levels on your side of the camera.



To continue to elevate your professional skills and accelerate your career goals or to just learn more about our industry-leading training and services, you can visit our website, send us an email or give us a call!

We look forward to supporting you on your journey!



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