

# Public Speaking - The Confident Way

By Cindy Lindsay

**L**aliophobia...Demophobia...Katagelophobia. Recognize these words? Probably not, but if I were to ask you the most common fears of people when asked to speak they would likely respond with fear of speaking, fear of crowds and fear of ridicule. Many of us have experienced these fears and their symptoms - fast pulse, weak muscles, dry mouth, cold hands, nausea, sweaty palms and tight nerves.

As a speaker, this is both good and bad! The bad news is that you will probably never get completely over these symptoms. The good news is everybody experiences them. With practice you can use these symptoms to your advantage and become a better presenter.

We all admire speakers who communicate the feeling that they are comfortable, relaxed, in command of the situation, know what they are talking about and enjoy doing what they are doing. Are they born that way? Or do they wake up one morning with those traits? No. You become a good presenter the same way one becomes a good athlete, lawyer or carpenter - by preparation, by practice, and by doing.

When you stand up to speak, you must first answer the question that is in the audience's mind: "What's in it for me?" If you can not give yourself a strong reason for the audience to pay attention to what you have to say - then you have nothing to say to that audience.

So, when you are given the opportunity to make a speech, keep in mind the following tips that, with practice, will help you conquer your fears and make you a speaker the audience enjoys.

**Be Visual** - We receive 75% of our information visually, 13% through hearing and 12% through smell, taste and touch. If ap-



propriate, good visual aids stimulate interest and help reinforce what has been said. But remember, visual aids must be kept simple and attractive.

**Add Humour** - Humour adds spice to most presentations. The problem is, very few of us are naturally funny. So don't tell jokes if it's not natural or comfortable.

**Make Eye Contact** - As a presenter you speak to people through your eyes. Look at people throughout your audience, make eye contact and smile.

**Make Your Voice Heard** - Your voice must be heard by everyone in the audience. Nervousness tends to make a voice monotone. It takes a conscious effort and practice to vary the volume, tone, speed and pitch of your voice.

**Take a Few Steps Forward** - There is an imaginary barrier between speakers and their audience. If you walk across that line

occasionally, you're telling your listeners "I'm one of you." Just a few steps forward into the audience will do it. Remember, what you do speaks louder than what you say.

**Make it Alive, Real and Current** - Appeal to the audience's human interest. People like things that are different, unusual or a change of pace. Real life situations experienced by you helps bring you closer to the audience (as long as the story is pertinent!). They will also pay attention and be interested when the subject pertains directly to them and their well-being.

Finally, the magic ingredient to a successful speech is **ENTHUSIASM**. People are persuaded more by the depth of your conviction, than the height of your logic... more by your enthusiasm, than any proof you can offer.

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## FWIO Area Convention Dates 1993

Area	Date
North West . . . . .	Sept. 20-21
North Central . . . . .	Sept. 24-25
Cochrane-Temiskaming . . . . .	Sept. 28-29
Northern . . . . .	Oct. 1-2
Grey-Bruce . . . . .	Oct. 5
South West . . . . .	Oct. 6
Simcoe . . . . .	Oct. 13
London . . . . .	Oct. 14
JWIO . . . . .	Oct. 15-16
Eastern . . . . .	Oct. 18
Kingston . . . . .	Oct. 20
Trent Valley . . . . .	Oct. 21
Central . . . . .	Oct. 22-23
Hamilton . . . . .	Oct. 25-26
Guelph . . . . .	Oct. 27-28