

► 2 – Be in Earnest

Executive Summary:

Speaking with confidence helps the audience believe the message.

Objectives:

- *To speak with earnestness, sincerity, and conviction on a topic you understand.*
- *To control nervousness.*
- *TIME: 5 to 7 minutes - or - 6 to 8 minutes.*

Be In Earnest

You presented a speech to an audience with your Ice Breaker speech! This is commendable as you gave a speech to a group of people!

A good next step is to present a speech that is believable.

Earnestness and Conviction

An audience will believe you when a speech is presented with confidence. This means presenting a topic with earnestness, sincerity, and conviction.

This is much easier when it is a topic you know well. A topic which you believe to be very important. A topic you want to present to the audience.

The audience may, or may not, join you with their support. Your challenge is to present this topic so there is no doubt that you believe in the importance. This increases the odds the audience will consider your perspective.

Speak With Confidence

It is common for speakers to experience stage fright when speaking before an audience. Many speakers have the same feeling.

Commonly speakers get so involved with presenting an important topic, they tend to forget the nervousness. They believe this topic is important and want to help the audience to understand its importance.

Speaking with confidence decreases nervousness. Knowing the topic well, and telling the audience, will help you overcome nervousness. Why? Because you strongly believe in your understanding of this topic.

If nervousness is a challenge, speak with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is contagious. The audience will catch it!

In addition, speaking with enthusiasm radiates confidence – to you – and to the audience! This can translate into the audience believing your perspective on this topic!

Selecting a Topic

Many of us are challenged with controversial issues. It could be a variety of issues such as taxes, street cleaning, arms control, or barking dogs. It is helpful to choose a topic on which you have strong convictions.

It is good to have a definite point of view, then prepare a protest, appeal, or call for action to promote your perspective. Your voice and facial expressions will change automatically, which indicates to the audience that this is important to you!

It can be helpful to have supporting material such as documents with facts and illustrations. These documents can be displayed to the audience as part of the speech, or distributed as a handout to the audience before the speech is delivered.

To help the audience comprehend the speech, it can work well for the Toastmaster for the Day to mention the intended audience (such as city council, chamber of commerce, general public) as part of the introduction.

An Outline

The speech could begin with opening comments that capture the audience's attention.

The body of the speech could ask: 1) What is wrong? 2) Why is this wrong? 3) Who is to blame? 4) What harm is done? 5) How can this wrong be corrected? Tell the audience actions they could consider (do, think, or feel). Your enthusiastic comments should indicate your sincerity.

The speech closing should summarize the body and help the audience understand the points made throughout the speech. Strive to convince the audience that you are earnest and sincere with a strong conviction.

Reminder Comments

It is always good to make brief comments on note cards, or on a piece of paper, to help you remember the sequence and points you want to include in the speech. Write (or print) large enough so it is easily visible to you with a quick glance.

Use very few words, so those comments do not distract you while you are speaking. This makes it easier to provide eye contact with the audience. Look at one person for a few seconds, then look at another. This makes the audience feel that they are important to you!

If nervousness is a concern, it can help to rehearse with the aid of someone is willing give you helpful feedback.

Delivering Your Speech

Involve the audience at the very beginning. Starting with a question is the easiest way to capture the audience attention.

The opening should also clarify the topic. This prepares the audience for the speech body. The body presents facts and opinions. The closing concludes with a strong note of appeal.

The main consideration is to put the force of conviction into everything you say, helping the audience understand your true beliefs!

Your Evaluation

The evaluator will be looking for the way sincerity and conviction is projected to the audience. Did the audience realize that this is a topic important to you? In addition, did this topic help mitigate nervousness?

All the skills you learn through speaking are cumulative and should be included in each successive speech.

Your first speech helped you learn about planning the purpose and main ideas. In this speech you are learning the importance of earnestness by convincing your audience that you know this topic and believe it is important.

Plan to use these skills for speeches! This increases the odds that the audience will understand you and believe you!

Evaluation Guide for **Be in Earnest**

See last page for more evaluation guidelines.

--- Evaluate the Speech, not the Speaker!

Speech Title:

Speech Evaluator:

Date:

Note to the Speech Evaluator: This speech strives to convey earnest and conviction on a topic that is important. It attempts to arouse the audience with enthusiasm, conviction, and logic. It is important for the Speech Evaluator to provide **many positive comments**, **one item** that could **strengthen the speech**, and **end with more positive comments!** In addition to the oral evaluation, provide answers to the questions below.

The purpose of the evaluation is to Encourage, Encourage, and Encourage!
Strive to have the Speaker look forward to giving another speech!

- How did the speaker demonstrate understanding of the subject?
- What made you feel his or her sincerity and conviction on the topic?
- Did the speaker seem to control nervousness?
- How did the speaker clarify the problem?
- How did the ending motivate the audience?
- Describe the effectiveness of notes used by the Speaker.
- What impressed you about the speech?

Handy Dandy Speech Evaluation Guidelines

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- Strive to start with **four or more positive** comments, **one constructive** comment, end with **more positive** comments. A constructive comment example, *"The speech could be strengthened by"*
- Focus on the **Speech**. Avoid: *"you could improve"*- better: *"the speech could be strengthened by"*.
- Avoid commenting on the Speaker's point of view or facts. Focus on the **presentation**.
- Use specifics. Avoid: *"opening was weak"*- better: *"starting with a question would strengthen the speech"*.
- Use a lot of **"I"** phrases **instead of "you"** phrases. Avoid: *"you did this"*- better: *"it appeared to me"*.
- Avoid judging. Avoid: *"the speech was good"*- better: *"I liked the speech"*.
- If it is difficult to identify something that could be strengthened, ask yourself the question, **"Is this the best speech I've ever heard?"** If it is not, try to determine what could make it the best.

Evaluator:

Speech Title:

Date:

C Opening: Address Audience? Get Attention?

O Lead Into Body?

N Body: Organized?

T Help Remember? Persuasive?

E Interesting? Support Material?

N Relevant? Appropriate?

T Effective? Clear? Inspirational?

Closing: Climax? Produce Results?

Tie It Together? What to Do?

D Physical Appearance: Appropriate? Posture?

E Professional? Shirt (men) with collar?

L Zoom: Hands visible? Eyes include webcam?

I Body Language: Eye Contact? Hands? Face?

V Natural? Spontaneous?

E Overuse / Underuse? Detracting / Adding?

R Deliberate? Precise? Appropriate?

Y Vocal Variety: Volume? Pitch? Rate? Quality?

Manner: Enthusiastic? Direct? Assured?

Presentation: Visuals? Humor?

L Word Use: Clear? Accurate/Correct?

A Colorful? Vivid? Appropriate?

N Precise? Simple/Complex?

G Dull/Exciting? Jargon? Slang?

U Always/Never/Everyone Knows?

A Grammar: Proper?

G Pronunciation / Enunciation?

E Vowel Sounds?
