



# The Speech Clinic®



## *Speaking Tips No 13, 050822*

### **When can the Audience pose Questions?**

There are various ways to handle questions from the audience. Here is a couple.

#### **Questions during the Speech**

You should announce from the start that the audience may pose questions during your presentation. This is often used when you frequently pose active or rhetoric questions to the audience yourself. That is a good way to keep your audience alert but there are a few pitfalls to consider:

- There is a great risk that you will run out of time.
- Questions will frequently pop up about matters that you will cover later in your presentation. Here you just say "I will come to that later".

#### **Questions after your presentation (Question & Answer Session)**

If you want your speech to run smoothly with a good structure, it is preferable to announce from the start that there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end. This does not stop you from asking questions to the audience during the speech but now you will be in control. Here are a few tips:

- At the start you can tell the audience to write down any questions they may have during the speech and to raise them during the Q&A session. You can also "plant" a few acquaintances in the audience with prepared questions. In this way you avoid that a shy audience does not pose any questions at all, resulting in dead silence. Alternatively you can write down questions from the audience on the whiteboard or similar and inform that you will answer them during the Q&A session.
- When the Q&A session starts you should inform that the time is limited (5, 10, 15 etc minutes) for questions. Then you always have a good reason to terminate the session without being impolite to anyone.
- **ATTENTION!** Always save your final message until after the Q&A session. The conclusion of your speech, i.e. the message which the audience should take home, must not be overrun by the Q&A session. Furthermore, if there are no questions, you break the silence with your final message.

#### **Always be friendly!**

**Do say "that's a good question" or "that's right" or "I have also thought about that" or "many people ask themselves the same question".**

**Please tell colleagues and friends to register for Speaking Tips!**

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