



The Speech Clinic®



Speaking Tips No 6 050222

Three threatening pictures you should scrap

The threatening pictures with which we scare ourselves before a public appearance can be devastating. These pictures make us convinced that the audience knows more, that the audience is hostile, that we will lose the thread. But this is all pure fantasy!

1. The audience knows more than you

The audience does not know more than you do. If that were the case, they wouldn't be there. And even if they know more, or as much as you, they still don't know your point of view in the matter. Think about it! How many times have you listened to a talk when you have said to yourself "how true that is, I did know it but I needed to be reminded and I haven't heard it quite that way before". Speakers often point out eternal truths in their own way and people always love to be reminded of them.

Hence, scrap threatening picture no 1.

2. The audience is hostile

Nobody in your audience has come to listen to you hoping that you will fail. The audience wants you to succeed and supports you. Many also envy you already for the fact that you dare standing there speaking. Think about it! Have you ever gone to listen to a presentation enthusiastically wishing that the presenter will make a fool of him/herself? There are people who go to racing competitions or bull fights hoping just that, but not to a seminar. There are better ways to spend one's time.

Hence, scrap threatening picture no 2.

3. I will lose the thread

This is the most frightening scenario. It is exactly this threat that scares people off ever to speak in public. People are afraid to be humiliated. That is what scares people most of all. OK, what then is so terrible with forgetting what to say next? Think about it! Have you never told a story to friends and got off the track? Have you not then asked "where was I?" Did they not immediately lead you back on track? Surely you have done that, and you can pose that very question to any audience. The audience is extremely helpful and at the same time you will get confirmed that they are on track. It is not a shame either to have a manuscript, with points to remember, written in sufficiently large letters and to take a pause in order to find your way back to where you were.

Hence, scrap threatening picture no 3.

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