



# The Speech Clinic®



## *Speaking Tips No 16* 051106

### **Put life into your audience!**

***A dialogue can save a monologue!*** You can count on the fact that an audience is always partially more or less tired. If your seminar takes place in the morning, you will have people who suffer from morning fatigue. If in the evening, there will be evening fatigue and after lunch food has caused brain drain. Not even an alert audience can maintain concentration for much longer than 15 minutes after which focus fades away. It therefore happens that the audience drops off although the speaker does a great job. Beware of the smallest sign of absent-mindedness or fatigue in the audience. When you discover that, then act immediately! You have to wake them up, but how do you do that?

Below are a few tips which you can use either separately or several in combination depending the need and the time at your disposal. You may already know this but I can confirm the below tips work very well indeed.

1. Throw out some open questions. Make the questions leading in order to facilitate response. Force the audience to take a stand even if you have to drag it out of them. Repeat the answers to make everybody hear.
2. Try to make others in the audience express dissentient opinions and start a short discussion between them.
3. Divide the audience into groups of two or three etc. Let them discuss a certain issue and present their opinions groupwise.
4. Tell them that you will be calling somebody up front to present his/her personal opinion to the others but don't disclose at once who that will be. Keep talking for a minute and then make a choice. During that minute, when nobody knows who is going to be the one, everybody strains every nerve to decide what to say if they are called forward, many in dreading anxiety. But they will wake up!

You may feel that it could be difficult to know which questions that you would "suddenly" have to pose or what you would give the audience groups to discuss. But that should not come suddenly to you – **it should be prepared!**

Normally an activity is tiring but in this case the reverse is valid. An active and committed audience does not get tired. Inactivity and passivity, on the other hand, can create boredom and THAT really is tiring.

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

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