

CB013 - Confident Presentations

Hi there and welcome to another episode of Confidence Bytes and today I want to talk about presentations, giving presentations, because this is an area where people often have a big issue.

And I myself, I, you know, I've had these issues before. In fact I can remember back in, phwoooo, maybe around 2000, it was a couple of years after my divorce and I was still getting back on my feet from things. And I'd joined up with Herbalife and I went to a meeting and, you know, we were sitting in the, in the chairs.

It was quite a big meeting, maybe three or four hundred people there and they said - (sigh) here's the doggy, come to say 'hello' - they said that, ummm, you know, we've put numbers underneath the chair and we're going to call out a number and you can check the number and if it's your number we would like you to come to the front and just give a brief overview of what you've been doing.

Now, as soon as they said that I just knew within my heart that they were going to call my number. And, you know, they called the number and guess what - it was my number!

And I just froze, I didn't want to move, I wanted to hide I wanted to pretend it was somebody else's number - but I couldn't.

And because of the peer pressure I was sort of obligated to go down, maybe - one, two, three, four, maybe ten, fifteen rows to the front of the stage and then I stood there and I looked at all these people and I just froze! I had absolutely nothing to say. I wanted to disappear, I felt so bad.

Fortunately the people in charge, they recognised this and they talked to me a little bit then they let me go.

You know, the whole thing about a meeting like that, standing in front of a lot of people is that you feel put on the spot, you feel judged, you feel, I don't know, you feel that you can't measure up, that you're going to make many mistakes that you're going to forget what to say and because you're focussed on those things that is what happens, that is what happens.

You focus on what the negative parts are and you create the negatives because, you know, as they say, 'Where attention goes, Energy flows.'



So how can you make a presentation, how can you make it work?

Well obviously, you're going to have to practice and it's much better for you to work with a few people, get used to speaking in front of a few people and then building up to up to larger audiences. But the key to any presentation is you need to know what you are going to talk about.

Now I am not talking about memorising it word for word. I think that, for me, that's much, much too stressful because I can't remember all the words exactly as they were written. I'm not an actor.

I'm not a, a politician who has someone write his speech and I learn that speech off by heart and just say it like, I think it was maybe Nixon or one of the presidents who went to Russia and gave a - it could even have been Kennedy, I can't remember honestly. But one of the presidents went to Russia, they visited Russia and they gave a word perfect speech in Russian, in fluent Russian.

They didn't know what they were saying, they couldn't communicate - they just learned the Russian by heart.

So, I'm not that person, I don't think you're that person.

What I like to look at is: your speech is like a river on its way to the sea, now the river goes and it can twist and turn a little bit and you don't want it to have rapids. Rapids are where you have mistakes but you can twist and turn a little bit and then it will get to the sea in the smoothest, nicest poss, way possible.

And what you need to do is you need to have 'where I'm starting from', where you want to get to and then the steps, dink, dink, dink, dink along the way. And these can be the twists and turns.

And if you have a, a, say, shall we say a powerpoint type presentation or a keynote presentation you can make key slides to give you as memory joggers and you know that 'this' part is first and that 'this part' comes next and 'this part' comes next and 'that part' comes next. And because 'that' slide gives you the memory jog then you've got the information in your mind about the topic.

So you just talk about it and then you just make sure you have a nice transition into the next part and into the next part.

And, you know, when you're, when you're talking to the audience talk to the people.



You know, I've seen, I've seen many, especially students in China, where, you know, I've been helping them learn English. I've seen many students give presentations and they're looking inside their head, they're just standing there rigid and they're going 'dum, dum, dum, dum, dum...' they're just talking out of their head to 'whoever'.

They've got no idea who's in the audience, they're not connected to the audience and the audience wants a real person. It wants, the audience wants to connect with you because you're giving the speech.

So how do you get them on your side, how do you do that?

Well first thing is, you know, we have to recognise that in these situations we have the heard instinct or crowd control instinct and they're looking to you to be their leader, to guide them on the journey that you're going to take them on.

That's a power they've given you by the very fact that you walk on that stage.

So what you have to do is you have to acknowledge that and you have to look at the audience and, obviously, if it's a big audience you can't make eye contact with every single person - but what you'll find if you, you know, just look around you when you're in presentations is that people form groups.

And in those groups they have a hierarchy, they have a leader and the people basically copy or mimic or emulate the leader - so you can work with that.

You look around the audience and you split, you know, and even if you can't recognise the groups, yet you split it up into little groups. Maybe you say 'ok it's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12' you know, and you just mentally split it up into groups. And you go to that first part of the group and you just look around quickly and you see who is, you know, leading and you'll see that, if he crosses his arms or does 'this' the other people follow. You'll find the dominant type person.

If you can't, just look at one person in that group, in that segment and say "Ok, thank you" mentally "Thank you for coming, I'm so glad you're there." move on to the next, move on to the next - keep scanning like this and then what you'll do is, out of the corner, out of peripheral vision, you'll start seeing the real groups. You'll start seeing the leadership in those groups and sometimes you've got, you know, obviously it's like, 'the boss' or the CEO or whoever you want to say or some honoured guest and everybody is around him and giving him that authority.



So you can start recognising these things and then you make eye contact with the leaders.

And be aware that sometimes, especially during the course of the presentation, maybe you reach a topic that, you know, instead of Joe being, you know, more knowledgeable about it, it's Mary and then so Mary becomes the leader for that part of the speech. And then you talk to Mary. You just look at her, acknowledge her and you spend a few seconds with her.

And you keep doing this throughout the speech so you're becoming a 'human being'.

Now a 'human being' is what people want. They don't want a robot. If they'd wanted a robot they might as well just have the computer there, put the powerpoint on, press 'play' and have one of the voice, er, you know, the, the, dic, prerecorded voices just read out whatever's on the screen...

They want a real person. That real person is you. Okay? And they want 'you' to be normal, to be natural, and if you make a mistake they're happy because it takes the pressure off of them. If you're perfect it puts pressure on them.

So, say you're giving a speech and you make a mistake and, you know, trip over your words or something like that - laugh about it - (laughs) and don't get petrified, don't get annoyed, laugh about it, make a joke out of it.

You know, it's, it's what breaks the ice and, you know, last week's program I, I, mentioned to you about the 'Provocative Hypnosis', Jorgen Rasmussen, where he had a client who was petrified of speeches and he was told to start his speech with:

"I'm going to make many mistakes because I'm petrified. But I want you all to have a good laugh at me because somebody should get some fun out of this speech. It's not going to be me and I want it to be you."

And that broke the ice and that took the pressure off of him.

The audience laughed and warmed to him and he made a really good 'human' connection.

OK.



So this is what you must practice doing.

And, as I say, don't try to remember all the words unless it's imperative - have the key points, remember them, that this is 'a' this is 'b', this is 'c', this is 'd' because this is where we're 'flowing down to the sea'. You've already done that.

And just have the knowledge to fill in the details as you go.

And, if you miss something? Hey, so what? You know, it's no big thing, you can always come back, *"Oh I forgot to tell you about this... erm, you know, when we were talking about 'that'..."* just like a normal conversation. Because that's human, that's real.

And your speech is a conversation, that's why you pick out the groups. You look at each person, you know, each group, pick out a person in that group, communicate with them. Spend a few seconds or moments with them, talking to them directly, looking into their eyes in a friendly way, you know. Not 'phooooommmmm' (looks threateningly at the camera) but in a nice friendly way, ok.

So do that, practice it and I guarantee that your speeches will get better. You'll make mistakes - GREAT! Because that's what you can learn from. OK. You'll feel nervous at first, yes! That, if you start connecting with people, with humans, you'll get their energy, their energy will feed your energy and then your nervousness will go away.

You know, I, I saw once, I was waiting to, to go on a stage with a couple of people and one of the people before me, I thought this person, it was a woman, a young woman, maybe about mid-twenties or so, I thought she was going to go to go to pieces. She looked, she was stood there and she was like, almost rigid and she was (sharp inhale noise) hyper, almost hyperventilating and, and I thought, you know, 'is she going to fall apart? Is she going to crack up?'

But what she was doing, was she was channeling her energy and when she got on that stage - Man, she was like a dynamo, she just came alive she was just so, confident, so powerful, so in charge and everybody loved her.

So you can do the same.

You just get there and you just accept and, you know, I've done it, you've probably done it. I've had something in my hand and I've dropped it - Hey so what? I pick it up you know, I talk to the people, I drop it again (laughs), you know, as I say, you know I



just say, you know tha, that's, that's what happens you know, because I'm a real person.

Or maybe you walk on and you trip up or something like that or maybe you find that, you know, your button's undone, or something, you just laugh about it as if you would with a group of friends because that's who you are with. They're your friends, ok.

They've given you this power to speak to them because they're respectful of you, because of the friendship. So you just repay that and you look at them and you communicate with them and I tell you what's going to happen, you're going to start enjoying your speeches, you know, you'll be surprised because the energy you get from that connection is going to feed you in a way that you wouldn't believe.

So, you know, as I said at the beginning, it is challenging, a little challenging just to get on the stage in front of, phoow, a thousand people, you know. But start small - join practice groups, join speech groups like 'Toastmasters' or something like that in your area.

Go there and start practicing, get your camera, get your, you know, phone (shows phone and points to the back and front) - you've got a camera here a camera there.

Use it.

Video yourself, talk to it, record yourself, pretend it's the audience. Put a picture in front of it, of a lot of people, ok, and then just have a little cut out over one person with the camera poking through so that you can see, you know, you can record yourself. And then just talk to 'those' people - don't talk to the camera, talk to those people.

And, you know, it's going to help you get confidence and you can then also, you know, as you're talking, you can also, as you're recording and talking, you can also play it back after and hear, you know, where you made the little mistakes.

May be you went from 'a' to 'c' instead of 'b' because you know, you were a little bit nervous, you hadn't quite got it down yet. But you practice this many times and you're going to get better all the time, all the time.

It's about improving and getting better and better and better and getting that energy from the crowd. Get them on your side, get that energy, let it feed you and your confidence will come out and it will feed them because you're confident even in your mistakes, you're confident in your mistakes because you're confident within yourself.



And they will react to that and you'll just have the most wonderful presentations.

So thank you for watching this program, go away, take your phone, use your camera on the computer, whatever - practice it, get it down to a 'T', join a Toastmasters or whatever if you need to and then stop worrying about 'it must be perfect' because we're human, we're not perfect.

We're people. People like people - we don't like robots, we like people. (Noise of an alarm chime) And that's my alarm saying I have another call, and I meant to turn it off. I apologise, I've just made another mistake but hey, no problem.

So I will see you next program. Thanks for watching, thanks for listening and go away and be more confident.

Ciao

