

PRACTICAL FARMERS OF IOWA

Emotionally Connected, Intellectually Charged:

HOW YOUR SPEAKER STYLE GETS
YOU THERE

*By Tina Bakehouse
Creighton University*



■ Table of Contents

1. PASSION	4
2. PREPARATION	6
3. PRACTICE	12
4. POISED PRESENCE	16
5. REFERENCES	21

Introduction (?)

Something about the grant? How to use this workbook? Bio of Tina?
Should we include info about Practical Farmers of Iowa? Contact details for
more information?

1. Passion

“Purpose is the reason you journey. Passion is the fire that lights the way.” – *Author unknown*

Dale Carnegie has declared we give three types of speeches: the one we prepare, the one we present and the one we wish we would have presented. Striving for the final speech, the one we wish we had presented, has driven my communication coaching and teaching for almost 20 years. From my work, I’ve found the most successful speakers are those who first understand their speaker style, analyze their audience, select their topic based on their passion and then practice, practice, practice. Seems simple, right? Interestingly, most clients and students are stumped when I ask them to define their speaker style, because they reflect little on the topic and avoid practicing their presentation prior to the event.

From this experience, I’ve decided to first bring “speaker style” out of the realm of abstract and into the realm of concrete. We know what a “speaker” is: someone who presents information verbally and nonverbally to a given audience in a specific context. When we hear the word “style,” we think of clothing or a design for one’s home. How then, do we connect the two? What constitutes your speaker style? During a break at a 2015 TEDx speaking event, a light bulb turned on.

In order to be engaging and audience-centered, speakers need to be “emotionally connected and intellectually charged.” Speakers must show their passion for their subject: emotionally connected. Speakers must have valid, credible and interesting information: intellectually charged. You may be thinking that’s a tall order, and it is. But when done right and well, a successful speaker connects immediately with his or her audience, making them lose track of time and leaving them begging for more. If you put “them” (the audience) first and present your authentic self throughout, your speech will have a TED-like quality and be uniquely yours, thus persuading your audience and increasing your overall impact.

:: Edging Toward Your Authentic Speaker Style

■ Workbook Questions

Emotionally Connected through Passion

When asked to present a speech, you will find yourself in one of two situations: 1). You select the topic, or 2). Someone chooses it for you.

If you're required to present a certain topic, write it here:

Even if you're not thrilled about your assigned topic, you need to find something you're passionate about to discuss, so your audience will buy into the message. Here are the questions you need to ask yourself when narrowing a topic:

1). What do you care about? Make a list of multiple topic ideas.

2). What do you think about these topics? You are what you think. Reflect on your list and be honest with yourself: Do you really care about this topic? You'd be surprised how many speakers casually pick topics they don't care about, and it shows. Your audience knows when you aren't being authentic. Authenticity applies even if you don't have a choice in your topic. For example, if you are presenting disappointing results of a study, it's okay to show some of that disappointment when you speak.

3). Select a topic (if it's not chosen for you). Read everything you can on the topic. You must get passionate about your topic first, so you can, in the words of Dale Carnegie, "keep eyes and ears and mind and heart open to absorb truth, and then tell of the things you know, as if you know them. The world will listen, for the world loves nothing so much as real life." And FDR knew the audience best when he said: "Be sincere. Be brief. Be seated." If you have accomplished the first two, your audience will thank you and wish you would stay on stage.

2. Preparation

“Knowledge of a language is measured by the nice and exact appreciation of words. There is no more important element in the technique of rhetoric than the continual employment of the best possible word.” – *Winston Churchill*

One of the most important and overlooked aspects of being an effective speaker is preparation; you must prepare and prepare vigorously. Always know your first and last line and know them well. Know your structure in between and be flexible, thus trusting yourself to create a conversation with your audience. Unless you’re in a high position of power or a public relations representative for a large corporation, extemporaneous delivery (structure is prepared but given in a conversational manner), rather than manuscript style (the speech is written out word-for-word), is more accepted as a style of performance.

Speech Structure Outline

I. Introduction

- A). **Hook:** Grab the audience’s attention
- B). **Apply Authority:** Show your credibility
- C). **Verify Rationale and Purpose:** What’s in it for them, and what is your speech about?
- D). **Establish Main Points:** List your two to five points

II. Body

- A). **Main Point 1**
 - a). Sub-point 1
 - b). Sub-point 2
- B). **Main Point 2**
 - a). Sub-point 1
 - b). Sub-point 2
- C). **Main Point 3**
 - a). Sub-point 1
 - b). Sub-point 2

:: Connecting With Your Material

III. Conclusion

- A). **Restate Your Points:** Remind us of your main points
- B). **Acknowledge Rationale and Purpose:** Remind your audience the importance of the topic
- C). **Powerful Pow!:** End as powerfully as you began

Purposes of the introduction: Interest your audience in the topic, motivate them to listen, and prepare them for the specific purpose and main points of your talk.

Introduction – Strategize and organize: **HAVE** a hook:

- H**ook us
- A**pply authority
- V**erify rationale and purpose
- E**stablish main points

Two rules for an effective start to your presentation:

- The hook **MUST** link to the topic and tone of your talk (avoid telling a random joke just because you think it's funny)
- You must be comfortable with your hook. Humor isn't the best way to start, as it sets the audience's expectations too high. Also, sharing a statistic you don't understand will quickly kill your credibility, setting a poor tone through the entire speech. Avoid starting with, "Hi, my name is," or "Today I'm going to talk about..."

Sample Outline – Soil Conservation to Soil Regeneration

- A). **Hook:** Start with a story (*speaker's observations of a corn field in December*) – "A few years ago, I walked through my corn field and noticed the sound of soil moving and scraping along the surface of whatever corn stubble wasn't moving . . . This experience led me to Don Campbell's insight, 'If you want to make small changes, change the way you do things. If you want to make major changes, change the way you see things.' "

2. Preparation

- B). Apply Authority:** We all know what soil conservation practices include: terraces, grassed waterways, wind breaks, no-till – and as Gabe Brown recognized, conservation is fine, as long as we're aware that we're farming a degraded resource. Iowa prairie is (or was) 6 percent organic matter and higher, which means we need to change our soil practices.
- C). Verify Rationale and Purpose:** We need to regenerate our soil by thinking about Iowa's native prairie; assessing what no-till is doing; highlighting cover crops; and continuing to make observations, working together to become responsible stewards of the land.
- D). Preview Main Points:** In order to understand how to get better at soil regeneration, I will discuss the following points: the importance of growing small grains; the importance of participating in a Practical Farmers of Iowa short-season trial; and the importance of creating annual pasture.

Purposes of a conclusion: Signal it's the end of your talk, remind the audience of your purpose, and induce action or influence the audience's thought about your topic. The conclusion provides a perfect opportunity to end with a strong idea, leaving the audience thinking, wondering and wanting more.

Conclusion – That's a **RAP!**

Recap your points

Acknowledge rationale

Powerful pow!!!

Sample Conclusion for Soil Conservation to Soil Regeneration

- A). Recap Your Points:** Today, I've discussed the importance of growing small grains; the importance of participating in a PFI trial; and the importance of creating annual pasture, all for the purpose of improving and regenerating the soil.

:: Connecting With Your Material

- B). Acknowledge Rationale:** And, as PFI members, we must not only take care of the soil today, but also change the way we see things. For part of holistic management focuses on the triple-bottom-line – financial, social, environmental – and develops a new framework for making decisions that affect the future of our soil.
- C). Powerful Pow!!:** In order to regenerate the soil, we must surround ourselves with supportive people: our family and our community of farmers. (*Read and show the “Heart of the City” comic strip, which ends with one character saying, “Hey, I’m the idea woman! I can’t do everything!”*) And although we can’t do everything at once, we can make small changes that matter in a big way.

Word Choice Matters

Winston Churchill, a renowned wordsmith, chewed on a sentence, even a single word, to see if it fit for the context of his message. As Brett and Kate McKay published on their website, Art of Manliness, “Could you imagine ‘blood, toil, tears and sweat’ [in Churchill’s speech] rendered as ‘hemoglobin, exertion, lamentation and perspiration?’”

Why was Winston Churchill so effective? Initially, he wasn’t. As a child, he grew up with a lisp and stutter, and one of his first presentations ended with him sitting back down, horrified at his mistake. He, like the late Steve Jobs – whose early performances lacked confidence – vowed to do better, be better. Churchill read a lot: His voracious curiosity strengthened his vocabulary and exactness with what and how to say things.

Churchill knew his speaker style. He knew he lacked skill in extemporaneous speaking, so he carefully constructed every speech, spending at least one hour preparing for every minute he would speak, according to McKay. His sheer will and drive to present a strong speech required hours of preparation, and then hours of practice. He didn’t start strong, but he definitely ended that way.

2. Preparation

■ Workbook Questions

Becoming More Prepared: Be Intentional With Your Talk

1). Analyze your target audience. What are the audience demographics? Are they voluntary or captive? How much do they know about the topic? What's in it for them? Etc.

2). What is the purpose of your presentation? (e.g., inform, persuade)

3). What is your desired outcome for your talk? What do you want the audience to do with your information once they leave the space?

4). Why are you speaking? Whether it's a conference, field day, webinar or some other event, think about the context and bring your personal passion into your talk, so it becomes contagious for the audience.

5). What's your time frame? Five minutes? Fifty minutes – or more? This will guide the amount of information you share. **What is the essential information for the given timeframe?** Audiences are much happier if you go shorter. *Think of the times you have sat in a class or sermon, getting ready to go, only to have the speaker drone on and on.

6). Which structure works best for your given purpose? For example: **Informative** = topical, cause-and-effect, compare-contrast, pro-con, chronological, spatial; **Persuasive** = problem-solution, Monroe's Motivational sequence, etc. * **Note:** *The example above was a topical organizational pattern.*

7). What are the two to five main points you will address in your talk? (Make them discrete and parallel.)

- a). Main point 1:
- b). Main point 2:
- c). Main point 3:
- d). Main point 4:
- e). Main point 5:

:: *Connecting With Your Material*

8). How will you start your talk to pique the audience's interest? (e.g., a quote, story, interesting fact or statistic, rhetorical question, visual image, etc.) Remember to do what's comfortable for you right out of the gate, for if you stumble in the first 30 seconds of your talk, it's a long road for you and for your audience.

9). Does your topic need a visual aid? Does your audience expect a visual aid? Does the visual aid enhance the objective of your speech? If the answer to these questions is yes, determine what type of visual aid you need (e.g., PowerPoint slides, a Prezi presentation, handouts, a picture or brochure, an object, flip chart or graph, etc.). Basic tips:

- Use more pictures and fewer words. One to five words per slide is ideal.
- Link the visual aid to your talk, following your main points.
- The visual aid is secondary to you: Avoid reading everything on it.
- Practice using the visual aid ahead of time.
- Refer to the visual aid during your talk, using your full hand or a two-finger point.
- Always have hard copies of your PowerPoint slides or other digital visual aid.

10). How will you end your talk meaningfully? (e.g., a utopian vision, challenge to the audience, quote, personal reference, etc.) Many speakers fail to end their presentations; they either trail off their last sentence or abruptly cut themselves off. This is a big mistake, for your last lines can influence people to think or do something differently. People debate whether "thank you" is an appropriate ending, as it gives the audience a cue to "clap now."

I challenge you to be more creative and to end with a poignant thought that will resonate with your audience. No one in your audience will walk away saying, "My, I'll never forget how the speaker said, 'Thank you.'" Impress them. Surprise them. Do better than "Thank you."

3. Practice

“90% of how well the talk will go is determined before the speaker steps on the platform.” – Somers White

As we’ve discussed, whether your purpose is to inform or persuade – and whether your audience is new or familiar – in order to connect and reach your audience, you must ask yourself the following questions as you prepare for your presentation:

- 1). What is my objective?
- 2). What will be the approach or style I use to reach this objective for the given audience?
- 3). How will I get my desired result or outcome?

Because a “practice” is a habitual performance, action or process of doing something, the more you do your speech and associated ritual, the more they become your speaker practice, thus enhancing your confidence and building on your style. Like expert speakers, you must craft the words with great care and finesse them to the audience with your body and voice. One wrong word or clunky phrase can throw you off, killing the connection with the audience.

Just as writers often have a certain time of day when they write best, in a certain space – perhaps wearing certain attire, or drinking a certain beverage – you need to create and practice your own speaker ritual prior to the presentation. I start my speaker ritual a week prior, framing my message and mindset. The two days leading up to the presentation, I establish a pattern of events and exercises to achieve success.

General Tips to Guide Your Practice

- **Trust the audience:** Know its core values, attitudes, beliefs, and prior knowledge – What’s in it for them?
- **Trust the speaking context:** Trust the reason you’re speaking; the what and the why; the space. What does the audience expect from you in the given context?

:: *Knowing Your Material*

- **Trust yourself:** Know your signature speaker style; your strengths and weaknesses. How can you connect with my audience in a meaningful, engaging way?
- **If you're a fast-talker, practice speaking slower.** To speak slower, say the speech backwards, starting with your conclusion and working your way to the introduction, or lie down, breathing from your chest, and say the speech from the beginning to end. By lying down, you will find you must slow your pace to have the appropriate breath support to move forward to the next sentence.
- **If you must have a written copy of your speech, make the text larger.** Use 14- point font, if typing your speech on a computer, and double or triple the spacing between lines. Add extra spaces in the text of your speech, so you're reminded to pause for effect.
- **If you sway back and forth when you speak,** place weights on your feet as you practice your presentation.
- **Practice the confident stance** (feet shoulder-width apart) while filling your car with gas or talking with someone. Make what you do in a formal speech setting a habit when casually talking with friends and colleagues. It will then become natural.
- **Be sure you have included at least one story, if not more, and an analogy to bring your speech alive.** Remember your English teacher's exhortation to "show rather than tell." Do the same with your presentation.
- **Add repetition in your speech, especially at the conclusion, to drive your point home.** Repetition adds spunk, a certain crescendo, to the speaker's cadence. We remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 17- minute "I Have a Dream" speech from 1963 because he repeated "I have a dream" multiple times. When JFK challenged us to get an American on the moon, he repeated "we choose to go to the moon" and other phrases for emphasis, which strengthened the poetic flow: "We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in

3. Practice

this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too." (JFK)

- **Practice the words aloud, focusing on the meaning and what you're saying.** Make your speech a conversation. Ignore body movements completely, and trust. During a presentation, your body is like a symphony. Let the words (the melody) guide the harmony (your body). When you match your mind (the words) with heart (the passion and feeling), your gestures and movement will be meaningful and timely.
- **Avoid planned gestures, facial expressions, or body movement, as those will feel forced, not natural.** When you think about your hand movement, your mind will lose the content of the message. It's like an opera singer focused on her uncomfortable panty hose; that unnatural feeling dominated her thoughts, which hurt her performance. Be in the moment and say what needs to be said. Like my former piano teacher stressed: "Don't 'B' flat. 'B' sharp, and always, 'B' natural."

■ **Workbook Questions**

Practice to be Persuasive

1). Find a practice space. Recite your speech out loud from beginning to the end with a stopwatch. Have a notebook and take notes when a sentence sounds clunky or a word feels wrong. **What did you notice? How did the words feel?**

2). How do you talk about your topic? Think about how you use your **voice**. Do you pause, allowing your audience to think about your message? Do you change your vocal dynamics from loud to soft, punching certain words for emphasis? Do you vary your pace from fast to slow?

3). Think about how you use your body. Do you engage in thoughtful eye contact with the audience? Do you stand with confidence, owning the space? Do you gesture, shaping your communication? These nonverbal choices influence your message's effectiveness.

4). Practice again. And again. And again, especially if the stakes are high. If you're presenting last quarter's statistics to your team, you may not have to practice as much as if you're presenting a keynote address for a conference. What engagement strategies will you employ? (e.g. stories, visual images, etc.) Remember, every speech needs elements of entertainment to motivate the audience to listen.

5). Practice in front of a trusted peer. Have him or her give you honest feedback. If that person says "that was good," probe further to get insight on both the content and delivery, for both are important to enhance your speaker ethos and credibility.

4. Poised Presence

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” – Carl W. Buechner

You may be asking, “but what does ‘poised presence’ look like *for me*? Sound like *for me*? Feel like *for me*?” **“Poise”** is defined as a state of balance; a dignified, self-confident manner; composure; stable; unwavering. **“Presence”** is a state of being; projecting a sense of ease and self-assurance; personal appearance. Putting the two words “poised presence” together suggests a composed, self-confident state of being.

Finding your own speaker style, your own means of sharing your highest self, challenges most speakers. Are you more open or closed? Do you prefer sharing lots of information, or listening intently to messages and providing feedback? We have preferences we’re naturally inclined to use when we communicate. Thus, forcing ourselves to act a certain way is not embracing our differences and our authenticity.

Whether you’re loud and proud or soft-spoken and deliberative, exploring how you speak, the words you use and how you use your body to convey a message improves your speaker style. The Johari Window, a psychological model for improving communication and self-awareness, labels speaker styles four ways:

- open
- closed
- hidden
- blind

Open communicators disclose more information with their body, voices and the content of their message.

Closed communicators are less comfortable conversing with people, and more apt to work with things.

Hidden communicators provide helpful feedback because they tend to be good listeners, yet avoid self-disclosure.

Blind communicators find comfort sharing their expertise and information they know, yet aren’t comfortable receiving feedback.

:: *Increasing Your Authenticity*

While these four distinctive communication styles give us some insight, they fail to consider one's speaker style for presenting information.

Speaker style focuses on the way a speaker communicates **vocally** (sound and feel of voice), **verbally** (word choice) and **nonverbally** (use of body), for it's what is said and how it's said that matters. Nick Morgan (2014) notes that with every communication, we engage in two conversations: conversation one is the content, and conversation two is our nonverbal communication, and it's your nonverbal choices that will make or break you as a communicator. Here's a vocal exercise from singer and musician Susie Thorne: Vocal work: Set your intention, then say the following lyrics: "There's somebody I'm longing to see. "Love is such an easy game to play."

Don't project your insecurity. Instead, add flair to what's already there. Additionally, John Capecci has emphasized that we're natural-born storytellers. Capitalize your message with your voice and present your best self, for if we use the power of story, we can synchronize our thoughts with the audience, connecting on a real, personal level.

Finding Your Speaker Style

Word choice: Concrete, colloquial language versus figurative and hyperbole language

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What types of words do you use when you speak? Are you more apt to use colloquial language, such as slang words or familiar in nature (**#1 on the scale above**)? Or do you like to pepper in colorful metaphors and figurative language (**#10 on the scale**)?

We all can tell stories; some just paint the picture differently. Think Grant Wood versus Monet. Both are equally interesting artists, yet they have different artistic styles, telling a picture through images. We do the same with words. Some speakers use more hyperboles than others. Maya Angelou and Anna Quindlen both paint word pictures in audiences' minds through metaphors, stories, alliteration and other poetic devices.

4. Poised Presence

Vocal delivery: pitch, projecting, pacing, articulation, enunciation, energy, inflection, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On the given spectrum, how loudly do you feel comfortable speaking? (**1 = very soft; 10 = very loud, amplified**) How often do you change your vocal dynamics by punching or emphasizing certain words for effect? Do you pause dramatically or slightly? Think of Barack Obama as having a softer, calmer demeanor and vocal quality compared with Billy Graham's louder volume and overall vocal presence.

Physical delivery: gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, overall body movement

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On the given spectrum, to what degree do you express ideas with your body? Contrast open expression – where steps, larger gestures and bigger, more animated facial expressions are used (**#10 on the scale above**) – with holding the space with a gentle stance (**#1 on the scale above**). Compare Jim Carey to Ben Stein. Both are funny, but in totally different ways.

After reflecting on yourself and your personal style, think of your next speaking event and the desired outcome for that event. As Amy Carroll lays out in her book "Undoing the Ego Tango," you play the frame game. You are in charge of your feelings and setting the tone for the speaking event. Do you want the ambiance to be positive (fun, respectful, connected) or negative (boring, disengagement, disconnected)?

We all want the former, but how do we do it? It's all a mindset. We are what we think. If you're asked last-minute to present at a luncheon and feel unprepared or frustrated, this attitude frames the upcoming communication. Your mind will set the tone for what your voice says and your body does.

:: *Increasing Your Authenticity*

Conquering the Fear of Speaking

Public speaking is a top fear, along with death. Even Jerry Seinfeld joked that some people may prefer being in the casket to giving the eulogy at a funeral. This fear is real, and acknowledging what and how you're feeling prior, during and after can help solve the communication problem. Karen Dwyer highlights the types of communication apprehension in "Conquer your Speechfright":

- trait-like (born with the apprehension)
- context-based (have a fearful response in a specific setting or context)
- and audience-based (when speaking with a certain group)

Being able to identify the "why" and using performance strategies can lessen your apprehension and improve your confidence, so you can communicate with ease.

Workbook Questions

Polishing Your Speaker Presence

In order to be powerfully persuasive and maximize your personal impact, follow Morgan's three steps to lessen your communication apprehension:

- Identify your fears.
- Develop a positive statement you tell yourself internally.
- Change your beliefs, thus change your communication.

1). List your fears.

2). What kind of presence do you want?

3). Set your intention for the presentation. Craft a short, positive phrase or sentence, starting with a verb. Write it down somewhere you can see each day. Clear your mind of any negative talk, erasing the negative

4. Poised Presence

chatter (intrapersonal communication), and replacing your negative statements with this positive statement.

Examples: "Think confidently." "Have fun." "Be present."

4). Remember, it's about them. Think of what your audience needs and wants. Be in a dance with your audience. How do you want the audience to feel about your message (e.g. excited, motivated, questioning their current practices, bothered, etc.)?

5). Be fully present and okay with fluctuating your talk in the given space at the given moment, if that's what your audience needs.

6). Set out your power suit (or appropriate attire for the speaking event) and be ready to rock your best self!

Final Word: Basic Tips to Improve Your Poise

- Prior to the speaking event, **use Amy Cuddy's power pose**, holding your hands on your hips like a superhero or raising your arms to make a "V" for "victory," holding it for two minutes. This technique tricks you into being confident.
- **Envision success** and picture yourself in the space doing well multiple times prior to speaking.
- **Change your inner dialogue** to positive, personal encouragement before, during, and after your presentation. You'll feel, see, and hear differences.
- **Have a calming speaker ritual the day prior and the day of** to amp up your confidence. Just as athletes prepare their minds by getting "in the zone," speakers must do the same.
- **Frame your presentation as a conversation** with the audience, not a formal presentation at them.
- To be an effective speaker, **have authority, energy, awareness and authenticity** (Pat Wahoske, Speakeasy Inc.).



References



- Carroll, A. (2010). *Undoing the ego tango*. Switzerland: Green apple publishing.
- Cuddy, A. (2015). *Presence: Brining your boldest self to your biggest challenges*. New York: Little Brown Company.
- Dwyer, K. (1998). *Conquer your speechfright: Learn how to overcome the nervousness of public speaking*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Gallo, C. (2014). *Talk like TED: The 9 public-speaking secrets of the world's top minds*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Morgan, N. (2014). *Power cues: The subtle science of leading groups, persuading others, and maximizing your personal impact*. Boston: Harvard Business Review.
- Zarefsky, D. (2014). *Public speaking: Strategies for success 7th edition*. Northwestern University: Pearson.

