

THE FIFTH BOOK IN THE FRANK TALK SERIES

# FRANK TALK ON PUBLIC SPEAKING

How You Can Overcome Your Fear And Become A Dynamic,  
Effective Presenter In Your Business, Profession — and in Rotary



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**FRANK J. DEVLYN** Rotary International  
President, 2000-2001

Best-selling author  
and speaker

**DAVID C. FORWARD**

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Rotarians have the power of a nation,  
but the heart of a mother.  
~ Jim Grant, UNICEF

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DO A WORLD OF GOOD



# msni

**Medical Supplies Network, Inc.**

Introduction by Richard D. King, President,  
Rotary International, 2001- 2002

# FRANK TALK ON PUBLIC SPEAKING

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How You Can Overcome Your Fear And Become A Dynamic,  
Effective Presenter In Your Business, Profession — and in Rotary

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By

**Frank J. Devlyn**

Rotary International President, 2000-2001  
Chairman, 2005-2006 The Rotary Foundation Trustees

and

**David C. Forward**

Best-selling author and speaker  
Reach*Forward* Publishing

This e-book has been produced by Frank Devlyn at no cost whatsoever to Rotary International.

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Visit **[www.MSNI.org](http://www.MSNI.org)** to learn more about this project that Frank has endorsed and chosen to help fund with this eBook project.

## FRANK TALK on Public Speaking

*How you can overcome your fear and become a dynamic, effective presenter in your business, profession—and in Rotary*

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## DEDICATION

Upon writing this book on public speaking, I have to thank my mother, who helped and coached me in making my first talks for my speech class in high school over 50 years ago. I have to thank and remember those teachers in Speech Class that I had in both high school and college. I single out for special gratitude Dale Carnegie, whose many books and articles on public speaking were especially helpful to me. My early speaking aspirations were also helped immeasurably by the Toastmasters Club of Mexico City, and many outstanding speakers—in Rotary and outside—who mentored me along my career path.

■ Frank J. Devlyn

I thank the National Speakers Association for their unswerving commitment to professionalism and for the lessons they taught me in becoming a better speaker, and to Dr. Tony Campolo. Tony has been blessed by God as a talented speaker and his humor and inspiring delivery has taken the gospel to audiences all over the world.

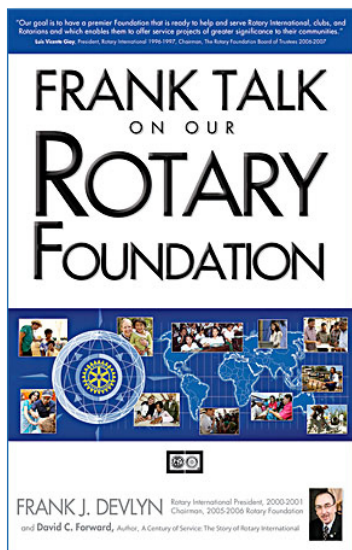
■ David C. Forward

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The authors wish to thank the many friends and family members who have encouraged them to write this, their fifth co-authored book.

As usual, Rotarian Jim Weems from Tulsa, Oklahoma has done a wonderful job with the cover design and book production. We thank Jim and Barb Weems for their usual patience, professional advice, and great service.

We are both grateful to the numerous leaders we have encountered in Rotary at club, district, zone, and international levels from whom many of the examples of great speaking skills have been gleaned. Life has indeed been a continuous learning experience, and many of the examples in this book were learned in our interactions with true leaders we have met in Rotary, business, church, and government. We thank them for being mentors to us both.

Finally, we thank the many Rotarians worldwide who gave us their comments that appear in the Appendix.

■ Frank and David



Cliff Dochtorman, Past Rotary International President visited MSNI and told us he has never seen such a significant project in all his travels all over the world.

He was so excited with what MSNI was doing that he wanted to assist in starting a new 501-C-(3) organization, Humanitarian Aid Resources and Transportation (HART). He gave a Special Initiatives Grant of \$30,000 donation to HART to database all the Air, Land, and Water transportation resources in the US and Canada so he could spread the word as he continued his travels.





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## ABOUT FRANK DEVLYN

**I**n the world of Rotary, Frank Devlyn is recognized as being one of the most sought-out speakers, constantly in demand for Rotary conferences and events around the world.

His background gives good reason why he is considered by so many to be such a unique, successful leader. Raised on the border between México and the United States, Frank proudly describes himself as bicultural. “As a youngster and student, I spent time in both countries every day,” he says. “Home was in Juarez, Chihuahua, México, where my mother’s family came from, and I went to school in El Paso, Texas. I was immersed equally in both cultures every day of my youth.”

Frank’s father, Frank Devlyn, Sr., a World War I veteran of Irish descent, came from a small town near Chicago, Illinois. Frank, Sr., was an optometrist, as is Frank’s mother, Nelva. After they married in El Paso, Texas, they moved to Nelva’s northern México hometown of Juarez, the country’s largest border city, and opened a small optical shop. It was the first optical in Northern Mexico. Frank grew up in the family business, and worked in the store almost every day after school. At age nine, he made his first pair of eyeglasses.

When Frank turned 22, his father died. By that time, the Devlyns had opened their seventh optical shop. Frank then had to lead the family business with the help of his mother and two younger brothers. In both hard times and good, the Devlyn chain of optical stores has continued to expand. Today Devlyn Optical Group has more than 700 stores and is the largest retail optical company in Latin America, with branches in México and Central America. The company also wholesales, distrib-

utes, and manufactures a variety of optical and ophthalmic products throughout Latin America.

As testament to his status as a respected, world-recognized leader, Frank sits on the boards of numerous national and international groups. He is frequently asked to serve in a public capacity and it is not uncommon to see Frank being interviewed by the media, Mexican government, or by organizations representing private enterprise and philanthropic groups seeking his advice.

He joined Rotary in Mexico City in 1930 when not quite 20 years old. Frank describes joining Rotary as “a turning point in my life.” He brought to Rotary the same energy, determination and forward thinking that were hallmarks of his business career.

His blueprint for Rotary in his 2000-01 presidential year was characteristically ambitious. To help Rotarians better accomplish the role of the world’s best-known service club, he launched the presidential theme *Create Awareness — Take Action*. In a sense, this is what Frank always has done, and continues to do in all his activities.

Frank and Gloria Rita, his wife of 42 years, have three daughters and nine grandchildren. Frank is also the author of the best-selling series of five Frank Talk books along with co-author David C. Forward.

## ABOUT DAVID C. FORWARD

David C. Forward was born and educated in England before moving to the United States in 1972. He is a successful real estate broker in Southern New Jersey and a much-demanded speaker around the world at Rotary district conferences and PETS. He has twice been invited to address a Rotary International Convention. David has frequently been featured in the national and international media, including ABC TV and the BBC.

David is a prolific writer, and has written 11 books, including:

- *Heroes After Hours: Extraordinary Acts of Employee Volunteerism*
- *Sales SuperStars*
- *The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*
- *DUH! Lessons in Employee Motivation that Every Business Should Learn*
- *Miracles Among Us: The story of ICAF's mission to Romania's orphaned children*

David co-authored *Frank Talk*, *Frank Talk II*, *Frank Talk on Our Rotary Foundation*, *Frank Talk on Leadership*, and the new *Frank Talk on Public Speaking* with R.I. President Frank J. Devlyn, and they became the best-selling books in Rotary history, with more than 200,000 books distributed in 10 languages. In 2004, R.I. released *A Century of Service: the Story of Rotary International*, researched and written by David.

A Rotarian since 1978, he served in many club and district leadership positions and is now an honorary member of

the Rotary Club of San Francisco. David Forward is a Major Donor to The Rotary Foundation and was awarded the Citation for Meritorious Service for his work as district chairman of the PolioPlus Committee. In addition to his volunteer work in Rotary, David is an elder in his church, and is voluntary president of International Children's Aid Foundation, a ministry that assists orphaned children in Romania. In 2005, the 1.3-million-member National Association of Realtors named David national winner of its Good Neighbor Award for his volunteerism. David helped charter three new Rotary clubs and is a charter member of the Medford Sunrise Rotary Club in Medford, New Jersey, USA.



*David C. Forward*

## FOREWORD

Long before I stand up before an audience, I put myself through a reality check. Why have they invited ME? What do they expect of me? Between the airfare and hotel expenses, how much is it costing them to have me there? A month—or a year—after I have left them, what will they remember of my presentation? J. Lyman MacInnis, author of *The Elements of Great Public Speaking* wrote: “The adage is that talk is cheap. Well, it isn’t. Talk can be extremely expensive, both literally and figuratively.”

When we think of “speakers,” we think of influential preachers, renowned authors, or highly paid motivational speakers on the rubber chicken circuit. But you also need speaking skills to effectively lead your Rotary club, your Sunday School class, the office meeting, or to offer a toast at the wedding or funeral of a loved one. Good writers, planners, and managers are a dime a dozen. But good speakers are worth their weight in gold. Good speakers inspire, communicate, motivate, entertain, persuade, inform, and rally their audiences toward goals that mere managers could never aspire to attain. And while we frequently picture “public speaking” in a modern frame, we can go back to the earliest days of human history to see examples of great speakers. Think how Abraham and Moses and King David delivered stirring speeches to inspire the Israelites to follow the Lord’s commands to become Godly people. In ancient Greece, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero brought oratory rhetoric to an art form. “Rhetoric is the art of speaking well,” wrote Quintilian.

Public speaking is not limited to the skill employed by professional presenters addressing audiences in huge convention

halls. It can just as easily describe a Rotarian trying to inspire her club members to back her vision for a service project, or a newly-promoted manager's assignment to motivate his subordinates to meet the company's objectives.

Simply stated, public speaking could be described as “Who says what to whom using what means and with what end results?” This suggests, correctly, that good oratorical skills are also essential leadership attributes. Perhaps it is this expectation of a combination of leadership skills, motivation, entertainment, and oratorical excellence that make so many people terrified at the prospect of speaking in public. This fear of public speaking frequently ranks at the top of people's phobias—even above the fear of death.

And yet the secrets to eliminating fear and to delivering an address that will inform and inspire are simple and easy to learn. The ingredients of a good speech obviously include well-chosen words, but they also must contain an outline that clearly delivers the intended message to the audience, and a delivery style—which includes the timbre of one's voice, the non-verbal body language communication, and our tempo—that creates a relationship between the speaker and the listeners.

Dale Carnegie, one of the best speakers of all time, once said there were three essentials to a great speech:

1. You must have *earned* the right to make that speech in the eyes of the audience, meaning you have to possess more knowledge on the subject than the audience has.
2. You must be enthusiastic, passionate, and excited about the subject. Audiences want to hear upbeat messages.
3. You must be enthusiastic about the opportunity they have given you to speak to *that* audience on *this* day.



The earliest evidence of public speaking dates back more than 2,500 years. We can look back at some of history's great orators in awe. Some might claim that the technology of our modern age, where communication is achieved with email, text messaging, FaceBook, and Webinars, that the need for public speaking belongs to a bygone era. But that is wrong. Indeed, with our reliance on technology for communications, there is an even greater need for us to be inspired by face-to-face communications, and thus an even greater value placed on those who can deliver those messages to audiences of every genre.

Rotarians meet every week, and so have an even greater need to be good communicators at our club meetings—and beyond our local club when we are asked to speak at district (and even Rotary International meetings).

In 2001, *Frank Talk* readers first met Sue, Duncan, and Bob when then-Rotary International President Frank Devlyn shared a train journey with them after his flight had been cancelled. When they discovered he was a Rotarian, they began voicing their ignorance and misconceptions about Rotary. But by the end of their journey, each of them had decided to join Rotary. A couple of years later, we met them again when Frank was invited to speak at their district conference, but this time they had become somewhat bored and disenchanted with their local Rotary clubs. *Frank Talk II* addressed head-on the issues of how to energize one's Rotary club. Then the four friends resurfaced in *Frank Talk on The Rotary Foundation* at a conference that showed Rotarians how to become more involved with, and supportive of their Foundation. Then in 2008, *Frank Talk on Leadership* gave numerous helpful hints for showing Rotarians how to develop leadership skills for both their Rotary and vocational

lives. Now in the final *Frank Talk* book, the four friends are joined by renowned Rotary speaker and author David Forward as the panel of experts that show Rotarians how they can make dynamic, inspiring, effective presentations.



Cliff Dochtorman, Past Rotary International President visited MSNI and told us he has never seen such a significant project in all his travels all over the world.

He was so excited with what MSNI was doing that he wanted to assist in starting a new 501-C-(3) organization, Humanitarian Aid Resources and Transportation (HART). He gave a Special Initiatives Grant of \$30,000 donation to HART to database all the Air, Land, and Water transportation resources in the US and Canada so he could spread the word as he continued his travels.



# INTRODUCTION

**By Richard D. King**  
**President, Rotary International, 2001-2002**

I was eleven years old when I entered my first speech contest. It was sponsored by a service club and my coach was a member of the club. Six decades later one of my proudest achievements is the speech contest my own district named after me. In my own judgment, no skill is more important for leadership than for one to learn effective public speaking.



I have read- and heard- many times over my lifetime, that nothing distinguishes an individual so much as both what the person says and how he (she) says it. And further that there is no power so great as the person who has the command of an idea, and can articulate the same.

We often talk in Rotary about what we do for others, often less fortunate than ourselves. But when I analyze the reasons one should be a Rotarian, it is clear we often overlook how the organization changes the member. The benefit to the development of the human spirit which comes from being a Rotarian is beyond price.

And, these benefits begin with the development of leadership skills and public speaking. Rotary creates leaders of leaders, people who have the command of an idea and can articulate with vision and clarity. Such is the purpose of this timely and clearly written book. I congratulate my good friend and predecessor Frank Devlyn on the commen-

tary put together herein by both he and David Forward. As Rotary is called more and more to the global stage, the ideas expressed herein will be helpful and beneficial to those who are called upon to explain our global mission of serving the human race.

Richard D. “Rick” King  
Fremont, California, U.S.A.  
February 2010

## CHAPTER 1



# The Greatest Fear . . .

*“Fear defeats more people than any  
other one thing in the world.”*

~ Emerson

“Dizzy.”

“I break into a cold sweat.”

“Fear. No—sheer terror.”

“Embarrassment.”

“Weak-kneed.”

I had not anticipated such a cacophony of negativity. I had asked the audience of incoming Rotary club and district officers how they felt about being asked to speak in public. As each Rotarian gave his or her response, the vast majority of the other 200 people in the room nodded in concurrence.

“You people are scaring me,” I said, showing my surprise. “You are the incoming leaders of these hundred-or-so districts. You *have* to stand up in front of audiences and inspire them. Yet all I am hearing is what, maybe 15 examples of why you are scared of doing so. Is there *anybody* here who enjoys it?

I scanned the room.

“One, two . . . maybe five. Five people out of two hundred actually enjoy speaking to groups. David, I guess we have our work cut out for us today.” I turned to David Forward, who nodded his agreement as he drew the microphone closer to him at the table beside me.

“That’s probably why we have a standing-room-only crowd in this workshop, Frank,” he began. “But I agree with the majority opinion we have seen here this morning. Fear of public speaking is one of the greatest phobias. In fact, there’s a clinical name for it: it’s called glossophobia. Let me tell you a story. I once had to teach a seminar of public speaking in Tampa, Florida. During the morning break, an audience member admitted to me his dread of having to speak in public. ‘What do you do?’ I asked him. ‘I work for the circus as a trapeze artist,’ he replied. My mouth must have dropped open. ‘You mean to tell me you have no problem walking a tight rope 40 feet above the ground every day, and yet you’re afraid to stand behind the podium in a nice, safe meeting room and give a speech?’ I asked him. ‘Sure!’ he affirmed. ‘Tightrope walking is easy. It’s an acquired skill. Once you’ve learned how to do it, it’s a piece of cake.’ He went on to say that living in Florida, he regularly encountered rattlesnakes and alligators, but even they did not scare him so much as the prospect of having to give a speech, which, as he entered management, the circus was frequently asking him to do.”

“He is not alone,” Sue chipped in. “I recently read *The Book of Lists*, and the authors claimed the fear of public speaking is what Americans dread more than anything else. Death ranked number five!”

“I must admit, I am with the majority on this topic,” Bob confessed. “Put me in front of a computer and there is no

problem too challenging. But don't ask me to stand up and address a group."

"I hear this from so many people," I said. "I don't want to dismiss or trivialize this fear—indeed, I, too, have heard these survey results that claim people are more worried about public speaking than they are of death. In fact, I remember watching an episode of the TV series *Seinfeld* where Jerry Seinfeld said most folks at a funeral would rather be the person in the casket than the one asked to deliver the eulogy.

"Fear is a very powerful emotion. What we're talking about here is really a form of stage fright. For most people, walking out onto a stage before an audience is, at least, unnerving, regardless of whether they are on that stage to sing a song, tell jokes, dance a ballet, act in a play, or deliver a keynote address."

"And yet the ability to confidently communicate a message is essential in Rotary, whether you are a committee chairperson, club president, or district governor," said Sue.

"It's also important for a successful career," added Duncan. "Throughout my professional life, I had to succinctly and persuasively sell myself and my company to customers, and to my internal customers such as my bosses, peers, and subordinates."

"I think you both make an excellent point," I agreed. "When I think back to all those meetings I've had with vendors, my management team, and our employees, I had to have a consistent, persuasive message. And I've never really thought about it before, but I suppose my friends and fellow Rotarians would never have nominated me all the way from a club committee chairman to Rotary International President if I had been terrified to open my mouth in front an audience."

“Let me ask you a question, Frank,” said David. “I know you learned the optical business from your parents. Did they also teach you oratory skills?”

“Heavens, no!” I replied.

“That’s my point,” he reasoned. Good speaking skills are not inherited. They are acquired. And whether you are an optometrist or a trapeze artist—or a Rotary district governor—those skills can be learned. And if you practice them over and over, you can leave your audiences inspired while enhancing your own self esteem and confidence.”

“I’d like to take Rotary out of the picture for a moment,” I began. “If I start talking about giving speeches at district conferences and the like, some of you will think, ‘Well, that doesn’t apply to me.’ So let me pick up on what my friend Duncan just said. In case you don’t know him, Duncan could be the poster child of corporate America. More than forty years ago he started as an apprentice for one of the largest chemical companies in the country, and he rose all the way through the ranks to become senior vice president. So, Duncan, were you scared when you had to speak to groups?”

Duncan drew the microphone closer to him. “At first, I surely was, Frank. I would prepare a sales presentation and rehearse it all the way to a customer’s office. Then I would feel the perspiration breaking out all over my body while I sat in their waiting room. As the company promoted me, I would go through the same feelings of intense stress before having to address the weekly sales meetings.”

“How did you overcome it?” I asked.

I will be forever grateful to my boss at the time,” he answered. “He saw how I would shake and stammer and pepper



my talks with *ums* and *ers*. He took me under his wing and showed me that speaking does not have to be stressful. It's just a question of how you approach it."

"I'm in that position right now," said Bob, brushing his long hair away from his eyes. "I was recently promoted to department manager. So how *did* you learn to make speaking less stressful?"

Duncan hesitated for a moment as if to recall exactly what his mentor had taught him almost a half-century earlier. "I learned, first of all, that one doesn't have to be perfect to be a good presenter," he began. "Even today in Rotary, I look at eloquent, inspiring speakers such as Cliff Dochterman . . . and Rick King . . . and I realize. . ."

"AHEM!" Sue interrupted loudly, with a theatrical head nod towards me."

The audience laughed. "Of, of course, and Frank Devlyn," Duncan continued. "I was deliberately saving him for last. Anyway, my point is, I don't even pretend to be in their league. When I was sales manager all those years ago, we would sometimes attend conferences with world-renowned professional speakers such as Art Linkletter and Zig Ziglar. If I expected to deliver the same sort of polished, perfect message as they did, I would be creating unbelievable stress—and setting myself up for failure.

"So be realistic. The world needs *great* speakers, the world needs *good* speakers, and the world needs *average* speakers."

"When I was district governor, I saw clubs with some way-*below-average* speakers," Sue chipped in. "And you know what? The clubs survived. They even prospered. And some of those pretty awful speakers that I inducted into office in July had become quite decent speakers by the following June."

“If I may interject,” said David. “We’ve already heard how stressed most people are at the prospect of speaking in public; one suggestion I often give people is to not think of themselves as public speakers. Be yourself! Don’t try to be something or somebody else. If you are a nurse, you are a nurse who sometimes speaks to groups. If you are an accountant you’re not a public speaker; you’re an accountant who also talks to others.

“Duncan just mentioned three of the most-requested speakers in the Rotary world. But I dare suggest none of them would call themselves public speakers. They think of themselves as a college professor, an attorney, and an optometrist who are passionate about sharing their Rotary knowledge and experiences. Now think about my point that also describes everybody in the room. We are *all* Rotarians who are sometimes asked to speak to other Rotarians. Agreed, Frank is a past R.I. President, I have written a few books, Sue is a Past District Governor (PDG)—but many of you have more knowledge and enthusiasm for certain subjects than any of us. Can you see how the prospect of standing up to give a speech becomes less scary when you stop thinking of it as a *public speaking* assignment?”

A ripple of nodding heads in the audience confirmed David’s reasoning had made sense. Then a hand went up from the third row. The aide passed a hand-held microphone to the middle-aged woman.

“I am president-elect of my club,” she said. “I never really wanted to be president, but our previous president-elect got transferred, so they persuaded me to accept the position. As July 1st approaches, I am becoming more and more nervous about having to stand up in front of the club and speak every week.”

“What, specifically, are you nervous about?” I asked.

“I worry that I might mess up,” the woman answered. “I worry that I won’t be able to motivate the members; I might sound boring. I might get questions that I cannot answer. They might not like me.”

“I can understand your concerns,” I began. “I would like to take you back a few years to when you first began driving a car. Do you remember that?”

“I do,” she answered. “Although you are being kind, Frank. It was more than a few years ago!”

“Okay then. Now think back. You didn’t even know where the key went, how to open the hood, how to put gas in the car, correct?”

She nodded.

“I’ll bet you were *beyond* nervous; you were scared to death. But you learned. First came the basics. Then, as you mastered those, you gained confidence in your abilities and learned to drive at night, how to drive in snow, how to be a really *good* driver. In fact, if you have had teenage children, you have probably taught *them* how to drive. So the very thing that you were once terrified of doing by yourself you now do without even thinking—and you do it that way day in and day out.”

“May I add something?” asked Bob. “I know we feel the burden of wanting to perform flawlessly when giving a speech, but I think we need to put it into the proper perspective. As nervous as I *still* feel when I’m asked to speak—whether to a Rotary audience or at a managers meeting at work—I tell myself this: *Bob, first of all, somebody thinks I’m good enough because you’re the one person they picked to give the*

presentation. Second, what's the *worst* thing that can happen? I mean, a pilot screws up his assignment and he crashes the plane; a heart surgeon performs poorly and the patient dies. When I put into perspective the fact that all I have to do is make a presentation, my fear and trembling subsides."

"Let me ask you a question, Bob," I said, looking down the table at him. "Why does your company ask *you* to make a presentation to the managers from around the region?"

Bob hesitated for a moment before leaning into his table microphone. "Er, I guess because they think I have the knowledge and experience those other managers can benefit from hearing."

"And what about Rotary? What types of Rotary audiences are you typically invited to address?"

"They primarily invite me to speak on The Rotary Foundation," he answered. "Because I spent time in India and actually participated in a PolioPlus National Immunization Day, I have become a passionate promoter of The Rotary Foundation. So I am often invited to give Rotary Foundation talks to other clubs, and at district events."

I looked at the audience. "My friends," I began. "You heard Bob say a few minutes ago that he was terrified of public speaking. You have now had an opportunity to see him speak to this very large crowd—and I ask you, did he seem scared? Did he stumble and stammer and have to read every word from a typed text? Of course not! Why is that?" I hesitated for a moment to see if I got a response from the audience. There was none, so I continued.

"It is because Bob *believes* in himself as having the skills to deliver talks on certain subjects. You have got to begin by

believing in yourself as a person, believing in the subjects about which you will deliver genuinely benefit the audience. It has been said that nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent. Well, nobody can make Bob feel that his insight and passion for The Rotary Foundation is not worth sharing with others. That contributes to the confidence he has *before* his speeches, and don't you think it will show through in the eloquence and delivery the audiences senses *during* the speech?"

I saw many heads nodding in agreement. I noticed a hand go up halfway back in the room, and the aide quickly passed the microphone down the row to him. "Good morning," he said. "I'm Mike Hairston, assistant governor of District 6460. My question is, do you—any of you on the panel—do anything to assuage the fear immediately before going on?"

I looked down the table and saw Sue volunteer to answer the question. "Truthfully, Mike, I believe the best tool is preparation. If I have spent time researching my audience, learning my topic, and have rehearsed my talk to where I know it is good, my fear almost completely goes away.

"Just remember, focus on the message and on your audience. It's not about you, it's about them. I used to feel my eyes glass over when a district governor would stand up and talk about himself and his accomplishments. So when I visited clubs or addressed district meetings, I always made sure my message was focused on the audience. I used to imagine each person in the seats before me asking them, 'What's in it for me?' I don't mean to imply that Rotarians are selfish. But every one of us has so many conflicting demands on our time, interests and money. So I knew that if I wanted to persuade them to support my goals, my district conference, my

Foundation-giving target, and so on, then I had to present it in ways that made sense to them.”

“I can remember when I first made department manager at DuPro Chemical, many years ago,” said Duncan. “I was so nervous about having to speak to my support team—and sometimes, my own boss would sit in and observe. He was a great mentor, and I confessed to him my fear of speaking to this group of maybe 35 people. He gave me this advice: make a list of each of my fears, then put a solution beside each of them . . . you know, how to overcome or dismiss that concern. Then I would take the list and file it away in an old cigar box. Every year during my annual review, he would make me bring the cigar box and pull out my ‘worry lists.’ And do you know what? Probably 99 out of 100 of those things I had been so concerned about had never come to pass! Then he had me take the old lists into the bathroom and flush them down the toilet. As I moved up the corporate ladder and had to make presentations to more and more influential people, right before I began, I would think back to my ritual worry-list flushings—and my fears would go away.”

“David,” I said, ‘you speak to some large audiences all over the world. Do you have any tips for avoiding last-minute jitters?’”

“Probably the best advice I know is to know your opening by heart,” he began. “You’ve just been introduced; the audience is excited and applauding as you approach the podium. The last thing you want is for the room to go silent as you fumble around for what your first words are going to be. I believe all speakers, even the ones who earn tens of thousands of dollars for each speech, feel a certain degree of nervousness immediately before going to the lectern. I find it helpful to give myself a pep talk while I’m still offstage. I use positive visualization: I picture the audience responding at a point where I use humor

or a poignant anecdote. I see myself at the podium, having a really good time, relaxed, smiling, and knowing I have the audience in the palm of my hand. I reflect on how that district governor or President-Elects Training Seminar (PETS) chair has invited me all this way because the audience wants me to succeed. I've spoken to little clubs when 6 people showed up on a snowy night, and I've addressed 20,000 at international conventions, and I am a firm believer in the power of positive visualizations to put myself at ease right before I go on. So picture yourself doing well, see the audience loving you, and then take a few slow, deep, breaths as you walk confidently to the podium."

"I hope you are taking notes out there," I said, returning to the podium microphone. "We've heard some really good tips from our panel so far this morning. I was just trying to summarize some of the advice they have given us on how to eliminate—or, at least, how to reduce the fear of public speaking. Here's what I have so far:

- Don't even think of yourself as a public speaker.
- The enemy of good is perfect. If you are not being paid \$25,000 to make your presentation, don't expect to sound like one of the world's greatest professional speakers.
- Plan your presentation according to the audience's needs and expectations.
- Make it about them, not about you—unless they've invited you to talk about your conquest of Everest, or something like that.
- Don't expect to please everyone.
- Use positive affirmations right before you go on.

“Are there any other questions?”

I saw the aide hurrying to the very back of the room and hand the mike to a man so far away I could barely see him.

“I have a question,” he said. “So far, you have all talked about overcoming the fear of making a speech. What I would like to know is: how do you decide the *content* of a speech?”



Rotarian PP Sheree Fukai of San Ignacio Rotary states: “I would like to personally thank you and District 6110 for the wonderful equipment that has been shipped to Belize through

MSNI. Every Rotarian in your District should hold their head proud in knowing that they have helped to save lives on a daily Basis.”





## CHAPTER 2



# The 3 Commandments

*“Rhetoric is the art of enchanting the soul.”*

~ Plato

“Before we get to the structure and delivery of a good speech, let me challenge you to ask a question.” I paused for a few seconds for my words to have impact. There was not a sound in the room. “Should you even give this talk? Why? Or why not? Putting aside the routine weekly announcements you may be obligated to deliver, say, as club president, why were you asked to give this speech or presentation?” I again paused as I looked around the room. “The Bible tells us God gave us Ten Commandments. Now don’t worry, I’m not going to ask you to name them all. “

“Or ask how many of them you have broken lately,” Sue chirped in.

“Exactly!” I affirmed. “But I suggest that in public speaking, there are only three commandments. Would you like to learn them?

“Yes!” came a response from the left side of the room.

“That’s why we’re here!” added a lady with a strong Australian accent.

“Okay, then. These are my three commandments that will make you a great—and effective—communicator from the podium:

Number One: Know thy audience.

Number Two: Know thy self.

Number Three: Know thy subject. I have asked my team on the panel here to elaborate on these. So Sue, would you lead off. What do I mean by *Know thy audience*?”

“No two audiences are the same, so it is critically important to know who will be sitting out there in the seats,” she said, broadly gesturing across the room. “Firstly, I will not speak the same way to a group in my business—the travel industry—as I would to Rotarians. But even within one of those interest groups, I need to know—way in advance of the date of my presentation—as much as possible about that audience.

“For example, I would not necessarily deliver the same message to a single club meeting as I would to a zone institute. From the moment you are invited to speak, you need to analyze your prospective audience.”

“What do you mean *analyze* the audience?” I asked her.

“You should ask the person doing the inviting as many questions as possible to learn what he—and the audience—will be expecting of you. For example, using those two audiences I just mentioned, a Rotary club and a zone institute, I would ask the person inviting me to define my purpose and the expected outcome from my speech. He might have the expectation that my talk to the club would motivate their members to partici-

pate in the district conference. In that case, I would want to know how long most of his members have been Rotarians, what they know about district conferences, what percentage of that club usually attends district conferences. I might even try to find a couple of anecdotes from existing members to use in my talk that would affirm my message that attendance at the conference will be fun and worthwhile.

“However, if I am asked to speak to a zone institute, the only common denominator with the previous example is that the audience will all be Rotarians. But they will be experienced district and Rotary International officers. Certainly, I want to make my talk inspiring, but they will want more than a mere motivational speech. Chances are they’ve some of the best speakers in the Rotary world many times over, so I am going to give them facts, perhaps an explanation of a new program, or specifics of how they can help bring Rotary up to the next level in their home districts.”

Do you mind if I add something?” Duncan asked. “I suggest that you even enquire as to the venue of the presentation. For example, if you need to show a DVD, will there be enough television monitors for the entire audience to see it? Will there be a technical person on hand in case the DVD won’t run? Will there be so much sunlight coming into the room as to make it difficult for the audience to see your PowerPoint presentation?”

“Duncan, you just reminded me of a conference I attended in Las Vegas when an Australian speaker went to give her presentation, only to then discover that the format for her DVD was incompatible with the American DVD player. To make matters worse, she had used much of her first five minutes really building up how this video was going to be so won-

derful. The audience waited for a good 15 minutes while the event organizer tracked down an AV technician and he tried in vain to make it work. There had to have been 250 people in her workshop and we all left disappointed that we had not seen the much-promoted program. Imagine how the speaker felt. Imagine how the event organizer felt when he had to field the audience's comments. And the speaker could have avoided all that embarrassment if she had just thought a little more proactively. That's why I always take my laptop with me on speaking engagements—because I don't want to rely on the host having compatible equipment."

"When I had to travel all over the world with DuPro Chemical, I would seek out the AV person the day before and have him do a dry run of my audio and visual materials," added Duncan. "I am not exaggerating when I tell you there were dozens of occasions when he needed to convert something, or add a piece of equipment, or somehow solve a glitch—and then he had hours to do so."

"What other questions do you ask when you analyze the audience to determine how to craft your speech?" I enquired.

"I want to know how many people will likely be in the audience," said David. "I have my own checklist I go through: how many other speakers will be there, and where will I be in that order? What topics will they be covering? I certainly don't want to cover the same material as the speaker before me! I want to know what time of day they'll put me on, and for how long. I am likely to give an entirely different—and shorter—talk if I am the third after-dinner speaker at 8:30pm than if I am the keynoter trying to kick off the morning plenary session."

"Speaking of knowing thy audience, how much difference do you see between different cultures?" asked Bob. "I know

when I was sent to India by my company, I discovered enormous differences in how we interacted with one another. For example, within a few seconds of meeting somebody for the first time here at home, we call them by their first name. But I learned that is a huge mistake in other cultures, where formal names are often used between people who have known one another for years.”

“That’s an excellent point, Bob,” I agreed. “If I am travelling to three countries, I might need to deliver what is essentially the same central message three different ways. That is why it is so important to learn about your audience, to make it—as I said before—all about them, not about you.”

“Excuse me, Frank. We have a question from the floor,” said the aide, passing the mike to a smartly dressed man near the front.

“Frank, what did you mean by giving the same core message to three audiences in three different ways?” he asked.

“Part of knowing thy audience means you should learn about the cultural differences,” I began. “For example, in much of the world, Rotarians use the word service to describe what we do: *Service Above Self*, for example. But in some countries and cultures, they rarely use that word Service to describe what Rotarians do, because it has a different meaning. *Service* is something the house servants do; they would rather use terms such as *Service to Humanity*. Let me give you another example: before speaking to an audience in the audience in the U.S. or Europe, the speaker’s credentials are often mentioned, either by the introducer or in the speaker’s own remarks. The fact that this person graduated from Princeton and then Harvard Law School and has written six books establishes his credibility; it burnishes his credentials to address to

the audience. But to audiences in Australia or New Zealand, that speaker would be considered a ‘tall poppy,’ a braggart. By simply doing what he has done to great acclaim all over the United States, he would be starting his presentations in Australia with one strike against him.”

“Frank and Bob make a great point,” Duncan interjected. “Even the way we refer to one another is affected by culture. When I would visit our offices in different parts of the world, I would often meet with people I had known and worked with for years, and we would refer to each other as *Mister*, rather than using our first names. I once made the mistake of calling a peer by his first name and was diplomatically told that I was not in America anymore and in Switzerland, such informality was not considered appropriate.”

“I used to teach multi-day management skills seminars,” added David. “And out of the hundreds of cities in which I delivered these workshops, two experiences come to mind. I was hired to teach employees at a culinary institute ‘How to deal with difficult people.’ But I did not do a very good job of finding out the real reason they brought me in. It turns out relations between the mainly-French chefs and the American support staff had degenerated almost to the point of an industrial walkout. The chefs used demeaning, sexist language toward the female employees and the support staff had devised ways of getting even with them. In another case, I was brought in to teach management skills to mid-level officers of a large city police department. But there were severe racial tensions within the department, and the participants resented being ordered by the chief to attend the seminar with people they couldn’t stand. All the whites sat on one side of the room while the black officers sat on the other side—and most of the day was spent with their arms crossed, absolutely refusing to

participate in feedback or other activities I had planned. Don't you think it would have made my job easier—and my message more effective—if I had known about these audience dynamics before I showed up?"

"What I am hearing is that different audiences have different expectations, and we cannot possibly meet those expectations unless you take the time to learn as much as possible about each audience," I summarized. "We have to be a bit like chameleons and change to meet the environment. Obviously, I want people to respond positively to my message, and since people have different 'hot buttons.' If I am to connect with each audience, it is incumbent on me to find out what those hot buttons are."

"I once met a speaker who told me it was easier for him to find a new audience than to write a new speech," said David. "I think he was pulling my leg—at least, I hope he was. It's not easy doing all that research and crafting to deliver a presentation that is audience-focused, but it's essential that you do so. I remember the first time I gave management training seminars in Australia. I gave essentially the same presentation I had given hundreds of times before all over the USA, citing various notable writers and university research studies to back up my points. Then one day at the end of the seminar in Perth, a gentleman came up to me and said, 'Don't you think we have business writers here in Australia? Don't you think we have our own universities that have conducted research on this subject?'

"I felt awful. I immediately realized how I had been rude and insensitive by being the American citing only American experts. That day changed my speaking career. Forever after, whether I spoke in Australia or America or Austria, I made sure I knew my audience and created a message specifically with them in mind."

I just want to add one more thing,” Sue interjected. “I have shown up for my governor’s official visit to clubs that did not have a lectern or even a microphone. So part of my advice is to let the organizer know if you need a podium, a mike, a laptop projector, and so on. I like to have two glasses of water with a slice of lemon—and no ice—next to the lectern.”

“Many of you know that I often talk about being proactive,” I said, looking down the table at the panel. “You have all given us some excellent examples of how to be better speakers by being proactive. Plan ahead. Think ahead. What does your audience expect from you? Why are they there? How will you address questions? What sort of technical or logistical needs do you have? And so on. You can see why I consider *Know thy Audience* to be a very important recommendation. Now you are ready for the second commandment: *Know thy Subject*.”

“Do you mind if I ask you something?” asked Bob.

“Go right ahead,” I told him.

“We’ve heard a lot of advice—and I’m sure it’s all *good* advice—about speaking to audiences on management skills. But the reality is, very few of us here today will ever be in those positions. So firstly, what can we who are just ordinary Rotarians do to be better at presenting just to our own club and district? Or maybe to a group of employees along our career path? And do you ever turn down a speaking invitation?”

I looked along the head table at the other presenters. “Who would like to start off with this one?” I asked.

“I’ll try,” Sue volunteered. “As to your question about if I ever turn down a speaking invitation, the answer is yes. You should never feel you are obligated to accept, other than for such occasions as the governor’s official visits or at the district



conference, obviously. Now that I am a past district governor, I weigh carefully the invitations I receive. Although I am honored by the invitation, the first question I ask is: *am I available on that date?* But just as quickly, I ask myself, *what could I contribute by accepting? Do I possess special knowledge or talent that could help the audience leave the event better informed or better motivated than when they arrived?*”

“Another example of making it all about the audience,” Bob said. “I have sat through several speeches where the speaker’s ego really showed through. It was evident to most people in the room that the emphasis was on the speaker, not on the audience.”

“So I’ll rephrase the question: when would you *accept* a speaking invitation?” I asked.

“I think Sue hit the nail on the head,” said David. “If you have a topic that could entertain, educate, or motivate the audience, then you should consider accepting the invitation. But if you know less than—or as much—about the subject as the average audience member, maybe you should decline it.”

“I agree,” added Duncan. “For example, if my club asked me to be keynote speaker for our annual Rotary Foundation dinner, I would probably decline, or would ask Bob to speak instead. The goal of that event is to educate and inspire people to be more supportive of our Foundation, and Bob has had hands-on experience where he can do that, whereas I have never been intimately involved in The Rotary Foundation.”

“On a similar vein, if I were planning a workshop on the global economy, I would ask Duncan to speak,” Sue rejoined. “His expertise as a top executive of a multinational corporation would give the audience insights very few people in our entire district could share.”

A hand went up in the audience. “We have heard several different types of speech mentioned here this morning. You called them speeches, workshops, seminars, keynotes. Do you use different *types* of speakers with different speaking styles for these presentations? And how do you know what sort of presentation to give?”

I decided to answer this one myself. “In all likelihood, the person inviting you will tell you what he or she wants you to do,” I began. “For example, the Rotary International President asked me to coordinate this workshop. As part of my *Know thy Audience* research, I found out the time it was to be held, roughly how many people were expected to attend, how long it should last, what Rotary International’s goals were for this meeting, and so on. Then they gave me the freedom to invite whom I wanted for the panel. So when I invited my friends here to participate. . .” I gestured to the head table . . . “I passed all that information on to them so they knew how to prepare and what to expect.

“I don’t necessarily think you need *different* speakers for the various types of presentation you mentioned, but the speaker needs to know the difference and present differently. For example, I am making this interactive. Anybody here at the head table or there in the audience can ask a question, go a little off subject on a tangent, or express an opinion. I felt free to allow this because of the amount of time we have allotted to our workshop. If I only had 20 minutes, I could not allow those audience interactions.

“So rather than prepare a formal typed speech for today, I came with a list of maybe 10 bullet points on a piece of paper. These are the topics I want us to cover, but the entire morning will be somewhat freeform in how we do so. If I were giving

a keynote address, I would have more structured notes and my delivery method would be more didactic. If a district governor or conference chair told me they wanted a light, after-dinner speech, I would make it shorter and probably use more humor. Can you see why it is so important to determine the purpose of your talk?”

“Frank, you have addressed the different types of presentation. Do you think there are different goals of a speech?” asked Bob.

“Certainly!” I answered. “People call me all the time and ask me to speak at their district conference or multi-PETS, and I ask them: *what is the goal you want me to seek for your audience?* This may be an over-simplification, but there are speeches to enlighten, speeches to influence, speeches to inspire, and speeches to entertain. Long before I stand at their podium, I want to know which sort of speech they expect me to give.”

Another hand went up in the audience, this one from the front row. “Frank, do you think the same person can give all four types of speech? Can one person enlighten, influence, inspire, and entertain?”

“Hmmm. Interesting question,” I began. “Broadly speaking, I would say they can. They probably possess the *knowledge* to meet all four goals. They just have to work on their delivery. That is the difference.”

“I agree,” said Sue. “And from my experience, I think the hardest one to pull off is the ‘to entertain’ objective. I’ve seen many speakers try to be funny and fall flat on their face.”

“That’s a good point,” said Duncan. “What is your opinion of humor? Should it be included in a speech? And when is it inappropriate?”

“Humor reduces the tension between the speaker and his audience and makes you seem more human to them—particularly if you can use self-deprecating humor,” I explained. “But, and this is a *big* but, you must be very careful about how you use humor, because it can also create a chasm between you and the audience. *Never* use hurtful humor. I also believe we should not tell jokes in our speeches. Firstly, comedians train for years and earn millions of dollars just so they can master the art of telling a joke well, with exactly the right timing, delivery, and intonation. I don’t have that expertise, so there’s a very good chance that I will mess up the joke, and how will that make me look? Secondly, in this world of the Internet, YouTube, and instant communications, chances are good that the audience has already heard the joke, anyway. So if I want them to take me and my message seriously, why would I risk my credibility by trying to tell a joke that they have probably already heard anyway?”

“So are you saying we shouldn’t try to be funny?” asked Bob. “I thought a little humor endeared the audience toward the speaker.”

I looked at Bob and feigned annoyance. “Did I say not to use humor, Bob?” I asked. “I use humor all the time. What I suggested was that we not try to be comedians by using the platform to tell jokes. I like using self-deprecating humor where I use myself, or something I failed at, to make the overall point. That way, the only person who could be offended is me, and it demonstrates humility and draws the audience closer to me.”

“I’m glad you used that word, Frank.” David offered. “Because I often tell people we have another 3-H to keep in mind. I believe the best speakers are those who demonstrate

*honesty, humility, and humor.* By *honesty*, I mean *be yourself*. Don't try to copy someone else's style. Duncan talked earlier about watching Zig Ziglar speak. Zig is an icon. My personal mentor. I can probably recite from memory half a dozen of his speeches. But I would never do so. Why? Because that would be stealing somebody else's material, and that's unethical. Second, because no matter how much Duncan and I love Zig Ziglar, we are not Zig! An honest speaker represents who he, or she, is—not who someone else is. I've had many occasions when a Rotarian approached me after I've spoken at a conference or convention asking if he could have a copy of my speech so he could give it to his club when he got home. That doesn't mean we can never use the words another person has spoken, but it does mean that we should give attribution when we do. I have heard Frank refer to Cliff Dochterman's famous *Friendly Fire* speech, and he always states that the concept was Cliff's, not his own.

“By *humility* I mean that we should not consider ourselves rock stars. Yes, we have been flown around the country or across the world to speak before an audience that gives us a standing ovation, but we must not let that go to our heads. We are there to serve. We are there to share the blessing God has given us of being able to communicate a message that will help others. It's not about us, it's about others. In my case, I donate my speaking fees to the orphanage I started in Romania, so it is a humbling experience to realize that this opportunity is a wonderful opportunity to make new friends while at the same time helping the kids in Casa Emanuel. I say it again, it's not about me, it's about them.

“And I think you already covered the humor part of the Three H's.”

“Excuse me, but I have a question.” I had not even seen the aide pass the microphone to the audience member standing in the fourth row. I gestured for him to continue.

“You said one of your commandments was to know thy self. What did you mean by that? One of the reasons we all came here this morning was because we all know you, Frank. Do you not know yourself?”

I waited a moment for the audience laughter to subside. “I suppose I owe you an explanation,” I began. “In fact, your very question makes an important point: if I say something from the podium, it is not enough for me to know what I mean. Unless *you* understand my point, I have failed to communicate with the audience. So let me explain what I meant.

“I have already talked about being audience-centered, not self-centered. Now, I can better focus on delivering superior quality to my audience if I make an honest appraisal of my own strengths and weaknesses. If I know I am always late, or tend to run longer than my allotted speaking time, or say ‘um’ a lot, I should confront those shortcomings up front. I might resolve to set my watch five minutes fast, or have an aide come to my hotel room well in advance. I can put a watch in front of me and ask somebody near the podium to give me signals when I have five minutes, three minutes, and one minute left in my time slot. I can have my talk videotaped and then count the number of ‘ums’ per speech, rewarding myself if I reduce them from, say, 20 to 10 to 5 to zero over the next five talks. We all have weaknesses, and letting an audience see some of those flaws can make you seem more human, more credible to them. That’s the advantage of using self-deprecating humor, as I mentioned earlier. But that’s different from letting shortcomings get in the way of successfully communicating

your message. If you know you are a great communicator of highly technical matters and know you have a dry, monotone delivery, recognize your strengths—and your weakness. You might want to avoid accepting invitations to deliver motivational speeches. You're not bad; you are just recognizing what you are good—and not so good—at.

“But I want to reinforce my suggestion that you videotape your presentations and then review them very carefully. If you don't want to hire a speaking coach, ask someone whom you know will be honest with you, and who wants you to succeed, to look at the tapes. One of the best ways for you to study your facial features and body language is to watch yourself in fast forward. Are you smiling and open, or nervous-looking? Do you keep looking down at your notes? What are your hands doing: gesturing to emphasize a point, stuck in your pockets, or gripping the podium for dear life?

“I know it is hard to break habits. I had a secretary once who was always 10-15 minutes late. Never more, never less. When I told her this could not continue, she explained that the eight o'clock bus was late all the time. So I told her to imagine that her work day began at 8:30, rather than nine o'clock. What would she do then? She said if that were the case, she would take the 7:30 bus. ‘Well, then,’ I told her. ‘Take the 7:30 bus from now on, because if you are late again, I'll be obliged to find a new secretary.’ She has taken the 7:30 bus every day for four years and has never been late since. You see: *Know thy Self*. You can only address a shortcoming if you first accept that you have it.”

A convention aide in the front row pointed to her watch.

“Speaking of knowing thy self when one forgets the time, I have just been reminded that we need to break for coffee,” I

said. “When we come back in 15 minutes, we shall talk about how to prepare your speech, and how to give a dynamic delivery. So, future great speakers of Rotary, we’ll see you in 15 minutes.”



## CHAPTER 3



# Presentation Preparation

*“It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech”*

~ Mark Twain

“Welcome back, everybody,” I said, gaveling the meeting to order 18 minutes later. “I have asked my friend Duncan to lead off this segment of our seminar today. Duncan: you have been invited to speak to a group, say, a district conference. You have investigated the audience and know what they expect of you and have decided to accept the speaking invitation two months from now. Now what?” I sat down as Duncan rose and moved to the podium.

“Well, Frank, whether it’s a keynote at a district conference or a presentation to my company’s senior management team, I believe that preparation is everything. You covered *Know thy Audience* before the break, and this is where *Know thy Subject* comes into play. I begin by asking ‘What is your goal?’ Then I write that down and keep it in front of me. Literally dozens of times between now and when I actually deliver

my presentation, I look at that Post-it note and ask myself, ‘Is everything I am going to say, every anecdote or humorous tale I’m going to tell—is all of that going to move me closer to achieving that goal?’

“Frank talked about the three commandments of public speaking, and David cited his 3-H’s of great speakers. I am going to continue with this rule of threes by suggesting you craft your message around three main points. Now let me immediately admit that there is nothing sacrosanct about the number three. You could pick two or four, but I find three works very well for me. That is what I want the audience to remember, and most of us can remember three lessons. So my next step is to write down what those three points will be. For example, if I were asked to give a speech describing what Rotary is all about to my city’s Chamber of Commerce, I might start my preparation process this way:

*“Who is my audience? Business people from many professions and trades, all with an interest in improving their business by networking with others.*

*“What is my goal? To represent Rotary in a positive light and to generate interest from some of those in the audience to become Rotarians.*

*“What should my three main points be? Rotary is a world-respected service organization with a vibrant local club. There is a great feeling of personal satisfaction in serving the needy—and while we cannot accomplish much as individuals, we can achieve great things when we work together with other like-minded citizens. And finally, other leading local business and professional leaders just like them offer a network of fellowship, fun, and business contacts that will enhance their lives.*

“Now I have my three main points, I will look for vignettes, facts, testimonials, research data, or inspiring anecdotes that help me make my case. As I go through this, I am asking myself whether I should use any ancillary resources, such as PowerPoint slides or a video. If so, of course, this is when I will look for the perfect slides or materials to accessorize my talk. But never use the video or slides as your main presentation. You are the speaker, and slides should be used to support you, not the other way around.

“So now I have my three main points, I may write out the speech and read aloud what I have typed. Another tip here: you will usually speak more slowly to a group than you read to yourself, so read your text out loud—slowly, with all the pauses and emphasis you intend to use on the big day. Let’s say that shows you your core content takes 15 minutes, which is about right, since the conference chair told me to make a 25 minute speech. I might take a quick look back to make sure I have given each of my three points the proper allocation of time, and I see that indeed, each of them took me about five minutes to read. Now I know I have 10 minutes for my opening and closing. For the sake of this example, I will now work on making a dynamic opening and a close that reinforces my themes so that the audience will remember me and my presentation—and I’m going to allot five minutes for each.”

“I have a question, Duncan,” asked Sue. “You said that after you’ve decided on your three main points, you fill them in with anecdotes and facts. Where do you find those?”

“I am always looking for them,” he answered. “I keep in my desk file folders with various tabs, such as Rotary, humor, DuPro, Volunteerism, Touching stories, and so on. When I read articles in a magazine, or see a funny story, or a fact in

the newspaper, I tear them out and throw them in one of my ‘Speaking Materials’ files. Then when I need stuff for a specific subject, I sift through those files for little tidbits I might have read years ago and long since forgotten.”

An audience member stood up and reached for the microphone. “I am coming in as my club president,” she said. “How long should I allow a speaker to talk?”

Duncan looked down the head table. I feel like I’ve monopolized the mike lately,” he admitted. “Who would like to answer this one?”

“I know at our club meetings, the guest speaker gets 20 minutes—and not one second more,” said Sue. “But when I have organized other meetings, I sometimes tell the speaker how much time we have on the schedule. On other occasions, I have asked the speaker how much time he or she needs.”

“That can be dangerous,” I warned. “I remember a district conference where a guy from Ohio was booked to portray Paul Harris. The governor figured he would take about 20 minutes—like most speakers—but never set a limit. The speaker went on . . . and on . . . and on, for one hour and twenty minutes. More than half the people in the room had got up and left before the speaker finally shut up. So never give a speaker free reign. David, how long do you think a speech should last?”

“The first time I wrote a story for *Airways Magazine*, I asked the editor in chief how many words he wanted me to submit. He told me, ‘Exactly as many as it takes to tell a great story; not one word more, nor one word less.’ I never forgot that advice, and I believe it applies as much to speaking as it does to writing. Just because you can go on for longer doesn’t mean you *should*. There is no prize for length. In fact, some of

the most memorable messages in human history have been the briefest. The Lord's Prayer has about 65 words. Lincoln used only 268 words in his Gettysburg Address. So my advice is to follow the outline Duncan gave, and then time yourself. If you go over 25 minutes, start to cut. You won't hold the audience's attention beyond about 25 minutes. Always remember the old showbiz maxim: *Leave them wanting more.*"

"I have a question." This time it was the sergeant at arms herself at the microphone. "When you sit down to begin writing out your speech, do you ever experience writer's block? I'm one of those who are terrified to speak in public, and I can remember a few occasions when I had to make announcements in church. When I tried to put them on paper, my mind went blank."

Duncan took the question. "That's what is so nice about the three-main-point approach. When you begin, you are not staring at the scary prospect of writing a speech. You are simply asking yourself, what three points would the people like to know? I take a piece of paper and write those three main points down the left side, each spaced about a third of a page apart. Then I make bullet points below each of those main points and beside each bullet put down a few key words that relate to the main point above. Do you see what I mean? At this stage, I am not trying to sound poetic or craft together some eloquent rhetoric that would make Cicero proud. I am just using free-form thinking to get a few key thoughts or words that support my point down on paper. Those are the bricks. Now I am ready to fill in with the mortar."

"Duncan, we suddenly have a lot of hands up out here," said the sergeant at arms. "Ladies and gentleman, to save time, may I suggest coming to this microphone in the center aisle if you have questions." I saw three or four people walk towards the mike.

“Once you have decided on your three main points, if we don’t yet have the files with research notes as you do, Duncan, where can we find the—as you call it—the mortar to fill in between the bricks?”

“The answer is really *it depends*,” Duncan began. “I now use *The Rotarian*, which has all past issues online and makes a great research tool. Of course, the old fashioned people like me still go to the Library. I use the Internet; is there *anything* we can’t find there, now? I am not a particularly funny guy, so if I need to use a humorous anecdote, I often turn to [www.MuseumofHumor.com](http://www.MuseumofHumor.com), which has all sorts of good material—some of which your good sense should tell you not to use. Oh, and be very careful about citing as fact something that you got by email or that somebody else passed on to you. I use [www.refdesk.com](http://www.refdesk.com) as a fact checking tool. [TruthorFiction.com](http://TruthorFiction.com) is another good fact checking Web site. Would all of you like to add anything?” Duncan looked toward the four of us at the head table.

“One tip comes to mind,” said Sue. “Try to avoid what I call ‘broad brush words’ that over-generalize. Words such as *always*, *never*, *nobody*, *everybody*, and so on. On two occasions, I made that mistake and was challenged by club members who were the exception that proved the rule. Unless you know as an absolute fact that *always*, *never*, *nobody*, *everybody* did it, you are better off using less specific words.”

“I learned something important when I first became a department manager,” said Bob. “People respond far better when you stress positive words or goals than negative ones. The audience wants to hear positive words from you.”

“That’s a very good point, Bob,” I said, having moved back to the podium since Duncan returned to his seat. “Let

me build on that for a moment. Your message will be received so much better if you deliver it in a positive light. Consider this: ‘Our club membership has really dwindled, and unless we bring in more members, each of us is going to have to do more of the work.’ Now, that may be true, but who wants to hear that? Now listen to the positive alternative: ‘Everybody benefits when we bring in more members. We will likely develop new friendships, increase our club’s fellowship, and with more members, the workload on each Rotarian is lighter.’

“Let me give you an audience participation exercise. I am going to give you a negative message. Somebody rephrase it into a positive one. Here we go: ‘Our club has the worst attendance in the district.’ Who will give me a more positive alternative?” I looked out at the audience for several seconds before a hand went up.

“How about, ‘Let’s send shock waves around the district: for just the next month—that’s only four meetings—we’ll strive for perfect attendance—and we’ll all feel a real sense of accomplishment.’”

“Excellent!” I said. “Now how about this one: ‘I don’t know what’s wrong with some people. More than 50 percent of you haven’t given a single penny to The Rotary Foundation in their entire Rotary lives.’”

An audible gasp went up from the audience at hearing such a negative comment. A young woman approached the center microphone. “How about, ‘Life is all about making choices, and today, I am going to paint a word picture of the real needs in our world that our Rotary Foundation is addressing and how you can feel so good about making a difference to those who are not as fortunate as us.’”

“I like it,” I said. “Can you imagine how you would feel as an audience member hearing the first message, compared to hearing the positive alternative? So *always* keep it positive.”

“Frank, may I add to something that lady said a moment ago,” asked David. “She mentioned ‘word picture.’ I believe we should always try to craft our speeches as if we are creating word pictures. We all know the old adage about a picture being worth a thousand words. Well, to those of us who speak professionally, that is *literally* true. Our challenge is to create images in the mind of every person in the audience. For example, if I am giving a speech and I mention a dog, what image comes to mind? In this very room right now, some of you are seeing a fluffy little lap dog, others a ferocious pit bull; some pictures a hunting dog, while yet others imagined a German shepherd. Am I right?” He paused while members of the audience nodded to confirm his theory.

“Now, think about this,” he continued. “Here I am, trying to get the audience to identify with what I am saying, with what *I* am seeing—and there are 20 different images in your minds! But if I said: ‘The young golden retriever came racing across the lawn, her wet fur throwing off cascades of tiny water droplets—that stupid Golden Retriever grin on her face; a doggie dynamo of fur, fun, and affection.’ Now every single person in this room is seeing *exactly* the same image. Am I right? So remember the importance of creating those word pictures.”

“That leads right into my next point,” I added. “If you are giving a talk that delivers factual information, try to be as specific as possible, rather than speaking in generalities. For example, which of these two statements would you be more likely to remember?



‘Rotary’s polio program helps millions and millions of children.’ Or,

‘In one single day, October 17th this year, Rotarians in India immunized 87 *million* children under age five against polio. Can you image: 87 million mothers, 87 million fathers, who will *never* again have to worry that their precious child will die or become paralyzed for life from the dreaded disease, polio.’”

“Now,” I added. “Let me also warn you not to overwhelm your audience with statistics, otherwise you will leave them confused. If I was giving a comprehensive report—let’s stay with the PolioPlus theme—that told you how many doses of vaccine Rotary had administered in five countries over the past year, I would use PowerPoint slides.

Somebody asked earlier when I use PowerPoint, and I said ‘very rarely.’ A good speaker uses slides the way a drunk uses a lamp post: for support, rather than for illumination. But one time when slides on a large screen do work well is when you want to show statistics, or when you have a list. Like this.” I picked up the remote control from the lectern and pressed the start button. Turning to the huge screen behind me, I saw my list of “Tips to Remember” was already showing.

Putting a list on a screen tells your audience how many things you are about to talk about, and it is easier for them to make notes from the screen than from your spoken voice. So what do we have here?” I turned on my laser pointer and began reading the list.

“Tell them what you’re going to tell them. Tell them. Then tell them what you have just told them. One of the oldest maxims in the speaking business. By making your point three times, chances are, it will sink in

“Always read a direct quotation. In fact, many speakers will show direct quotations on the screen. Never try to remember direct quotations. You might get distracted, or have a brain warp, and can you imagine taking a direct quotation such as ‘I have a dream,’ or ‘Ask not what your country can do for you’ and messing it up?

“This one goes back to *Know thy Self*. If you have your own little demon words that you tend to mispronounce, write them down phonetically, and capitalize them. I’ve heard speakers say ‘prostate’ when they meant ‘prostrate,’ and use words that simply don’t exist, such as *Realator*, *Febuary*, *Athalete*, and *Nuculear*. You know who you are! Don’t risk looking foolish in front of an audience. Highlight the words you know are your downfall!

“Never start by introducing yourself. Always have somebody else do that.

“Involve your audience by asking questions—even rhetorical ones—during your speech.

“Use active voice. It is more powerful than passive voice. For example, *He was picked up at the airport* is passive voice. If you want to change passive to active voice, simply pose the question: *who did what?* So to make the previous statement into active voice, you might say, *John picked him up at the airport*. You see, it is more interesting, because it tells you who did what, as opposed to something that happened to somebody.

“Use short sentences. People have difficulty keeping up with long, rambling sentences.

“Plan your bridges. Let me explain that one. What is a bridge? It is something that takes you from one place to another, right? Now, imagine your speech, which has an opening, three main points, and a closing, and see that as five islands. *You* know you’ve just come to the edge of one of the islands,

but your audience doesn't. So you use a bridge to get them from one island to the next. Let's stay with my PolioPlus theme. I'm preparing a keynote to the convention here. I have just given a strong opening that really got your attention as to why polio is still a problem. Now I need to get you seamlessly to my first main point. So I might say, 'But while that is the *bad* news, I am here today to tell you about how *you* can be part of the good news!' And that segues me into my first main point. It's a bridge to the next island."

I pressed the off button and the screen went dark. "Are there any more questions on the topic of preparing your presentations?"

"Do you read your speech verbatim from a prepared text?" asked the first man at the aisle microphone.

"I'll bet our panel has different answers to that one," I said, turning to the head table. "How do you handle it?"

"I usually write out the complete speech and then read it," said Duncan.

"Me too," Bob concurred.

"It depends," said Sue. "When I started my governor's official visits, I would read from a script. But after delivering the same speech eight or ten times, I reduced it to bullet points."

"I agree that it depends on the venue," David began. "If I speak at a large convention, I often have to send in a complete text weeks in advance so they can put it on the Teleprompter and give it to the simultaneous language translators. In cases like that, *I have* to read the speech, otherwise it would send the poor translators and teleprompter operator into a tizzy. But most of the time, I will write it out completely, practice it for timing and flow, and then reduce it to a few bullet points on a card.

“This is just a personal thing with me, but I don’t like to see people reading their speech. So if you do have to follow a script, I suggest you number the pages—in case you drop them. Use a very large font—18 point, minimum. Double-space the text, using upper and lower case—that’s easier to read than all capitals. Then a tip I learned in the National Speakers Association: only type the speech on the upper two-thirds of the page. That allows you to easily scan the speech on the lectern in front of you, without dropping your eyes all the way to the bottom of the page. You never want to lose eye contact with the audience.”

“Thank you, David,” I said, glancing down at my watch on the lectern and realizing that we needed to move on to the next segment. “Is there one final question?”

“Frank, if I may, I wonder if you would just repeat the four general categories of speech, please,” asked the sergeant at arms handling the microphone.

“Sure. I said that there are speeches to enlighten, speeches to influence, speeches to inspire, and speeches to entertain,” I replied. “And let me just add that no matter what sort of speech you are making, and whether you are delivering it from a typed text or a bullet-pointed list on an index card, the most important thing is for you to sound natural. Don’t try to sound like a professional speaker; try to sound like yourself. And the best way to sound natural is to speak as if you are having a conversation on the couch with a few friends.

“So, now it’s time for *my* bridge. You have planned ahead and found out what your talk is to be about, you *know thy audience*, and you have carefully crafted your speech, rehearsed it, timed it, and the big moment has arrived. You are sitting right down there at the head table as you hear your introduction being made. Let’s talk about your delivery!”

## CHAPTER 4



# Dynamic Delivery

*“All the world’s a stage, and all the men  
and women are merely players.”*

~ Shakespeare

“Okay,” I said. “I am going to ask my friend Sue to come up here and lead off the next segment of our workshop today. You can read Sue’s bio in your handout. But while she is heading up, I will tell you that Sue is a rising star in Rotary. She was a great club president and a superb district governor. I have seen her speak to audiences both in her own district and at a Zone Institute, and she is a dynamic presenter. So without further ado, Sue, you’re on.” Sue walked briskly across the stage, gave me a hug, and smiled broadly at the audience as she drew the microphone to her level.

“Hi everybody!” she exclaimed. “Buenos Dias, Bonjour, Guten morgen. Or, if you’re from the Southern United States, Hey, y’all! We are going to have some *fun* together.”

I noticed that already the audience seemed more alert. Evidently, Sue’s energetic start was being transferred to everybody in the room. Reaching behind her back to turn on

her lapel microphone, she moved away from the lectern to the front of the stage.

“I want you to come on a journey with me,” she said, slowly scanning the audience in a sweep from left to right. “You have returned home from this convention feeling much more confident about speaking in public. You’ve accepted an invitation to give a 20-minute talk to, say, your local high school, which is interested in starting an Interact club. You have gone through all the notes you’ve taken here today and have researched your audience, your topic, and your fear of speaking has pretty much gone away. You have written out your speech, rehearsed it several times and feel really confident about the message you have crafted.

“And . . . now . . . what?”

She slowed down those last three words, still shifting her gaze slowly from one side of the vast room to the other. The effect was dramatic. It may be a cliché, but you could have heard a pin drop. Every person in the audience sat riveted on Sue at the front of the stage. After a full five seconds of silence, she brought her hands together and raised her right index finger in the air:

“Delivery!” she pronounced. “The moment of truth. No matter how well you have prepared for your speech, the *way* you deliver it will determine whether the audience loves it—or is bored by it. And that’s what we are going to talk about now.”

Sue walked back to the podium. “Think of a teacher, or a preacher, or a political leader: no matter how much knowledge they possess, if they are not able to engage with their audience, they will not succeed in their vocations. Their audiences, whether they are students, congregations, or voters—will soon bore of them and block out their message.

“One way to describe *delivery*, I believe, is to think of it as theatre. Think back over the past three or four minutes. As Frank introduced me, I didn’t amble up to the lectern, shoulders hunched, and a blank look on my face. I don’t want your first impression of me to depict lethargy! I strode quickly across the stage—denoting energy and confidence. Then, instead of grabbing both sides of the lectern and hiding behind it, I moved out to the front of the stage. By doing that, I removed the physical barrier between us. Instead of seeing a talking head behind this big visual obstacle, you saw *me*! I know I have a much greater chance of holding your attention if I am right in front of you. Then did you notice what else I did?”

Sue stopped and looked around for an answer.

“First, I maintained eye contact with you by gradually scanning back and forth. Now don’t overdo it: I don’t want you to be like those little dogs you see in the back of car windows moving back and forth so fast that you might faint! But one of the most important parts of delivery is to establish eye contact with your audience. Finally, I really wanted to get your attention, so I used one of the speaker’s most valuable tools: the pause. I just did it again—when I asked, ‘Did you notice what else I did?’ The pause is dramatic. In that moment of complete silence, it draws the attention of the entire audience to the speaker and rivets their focus on the last thing you said—which is usually a question you want them to ponder.

“You see, when I am speaking from the front of the room, I want your complete attention on *me*. Let me quickly stress that I am not saying that from an egotistical standpoint. But why am I here? I am here, giving this speech, because somebody thought I could deliver a message that the audience would find helpful, entertaining, or interesting. I have spent untold hours

putting together a talk that delivers on that expectation. Now I'm up here, I don't want to lose the opportunity of getting my message through because some audience members are talking, or daydreaming, or texting on their cell phones. So which speaker is more likely to capture your attention: the one who shuffles up to the lectern and begins reading his speech so carefully that he never lifts his eyes off the text, or the one who exhibits energy and excitement?

"You only have a few seconds—a minute or two at the most—for your audience to decide if they like you or don't. The comedian George Jessel once said, 'If you haven't struck oil in your first three minutes, stop boring.' That's why your opening is so important—and I consider the opening to include the part even before you open your mouth. You must get their attention and interest from the moment they see you enter the stage. Now, let me detour from the content of your speech for a moment to talk about another very important secret of the best speakers: *body language*.

"I've just admitted to you that I have spent about 30 hours putting together the perfect speech. I've gone over every word 20 times to be sure it made sense . . . and do you know what?"

Sue again used the pause. Every face in the room was looking at her expectantly.

"*Words* only account for about seven percent of the message we communicate. *Seven percent!*" She threw her hands up in the air in a show of submission. "Why did I even bother?" The audience laughed.

"About 38 percent of our message is communicated by the *tone* we use. How many of you have teenage kids?" Many hands went up. I didn't know if she had asked the question



because she really wanted to know the number, or if she was demonstrating the value of engaging the audience. Whatever her purpose, it was working. “Do you get the right words given to you, but with eyes that are rolled. ‘*Yes, mom.*’ Does that drive you crazy? But I’ll bet that just as many of you had your own mothers chastise you, when you were kids, by telling you, ‘It wasn’t *what* you said that made me angry, it was how you said it.’ Am I right?” Again, the audience laughed and many heads were nodding.

“You see, your mother was right. The tone you use, the inflection of your voice, your emphasis on certain key terms, the variation on your vocal volume—all of these are powerful components of how you will hold your audience’s attention.

“But the greatest single influence on how we communicate with others is through our body language. Body language! Imagine if I was to use the exact same words for my speech, but I delivered them while seated. Now imagine I was to deliver that same speech while standing at the podium, but I read every word from a script. Now I am going to deliver the same speech, but while walking back and forth at the front of the stage. Do you think there would be any difference in how engaged you would feel? Yet I used the same words!

“Eye contact, open facial expressions, using gestures—these all convey positive body language messages. In fact, look at some of the most sought-after political speakers, like Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Colin Powell, and Barack Obama and notice how they use facial expressions and hand gestures constantly to emphasize key points and maintain energy in their presentations. In contrast, slouching over the lectern or having your eyes glued to a script conveys nervousness.

“Incidentally, I should also warn you about using gestures. Be aware that certain gestures we use in our country are considered offensive in others. I remember being at a dinner in Brazil when my host asked if I was enjoying the meal—at the moment when my mouth was full. I made the ‘OK’ gesture connecting my thumb and index finger in a circle—and his eyes almost popped out. Only later did I discover that in Brazil that gesture meant you wanted to sleep with the person. And in the UK, the difference between the ‘V’ for victory sign and an indescribably rude insult depends on which way your palms faces. So be very careful with gestures if you are speaking to a cross-cultural audience.”

Sue paused to take a sip of water.

“That reminds me,” she added. “The best speakers are proactive. They know that caffeine can adversely affect their voice, so they stay away from coffee, soda, and tea before they speak. I use a checklist and always ask that two glasses of water with lemon be placed next to the lectern before I go on. I want them at room temperature and without ice, because the cold can constrict the vocal chords. If I am to be the first speaker, I check—or have somebody else check—the microphone before the audience is in the room to ensure it is working properly. There are few things more unprofessional than for a speaker to get to the lectern and then tap the mike and ask, ‘Is this thing on?’ If I am sitting at the head table and notice there is music playing on the house speakers, don’t wait until you go to the lectern to ask if the music can be turned off.

“Even if I am giving a keynote, I don’t see myself giving a speech to the audience so much as having a conversation with them. And a conversation is a two-way communication. So even though the format or time allotment may not permit me

to take questions from them, I try to engage the audience by making it interactive. I can do that by making my tone more conversational than lecturing, and I can do it by sprinkling a few rhetorical questions into the talk, so they will feel involved. Does that make sense?”

I saw many heads nodding.

“You see!” said Sue from the front of the stage, “That was a rhetorical question! Now, this is *not* a keynote; this is a workshop, and so I don’t want to monopolize the conversation. We have some great speakers here on the panel, and we want to answer every question you have. So let’s use the floor mike there in the center aisle, and we’ll take as many questions as we have answers for. Who’s the first victim?”

“Several of you have cautioned us not to read from a script,” began the first questioner. “So do you recommend we wing it?”

“Bob,” said Sue. “How would you answer that?”

“I absolutely would *not* advocate winging it,” he said. “In this era of cell phone cameras and YouTube, you have no idea who is recording what you say. Look at the politicians whose career aspirations have been sunk because of an off-the-cuff remark they made that was recorded and came back to haunt them. Now, rehearsing your talk and then reducing it to bullet points that you can easily scan is not winging it.”

“My question concerns the opening,” said the next in line at the microphone. “Several of you talked about the importance of a strong opening, but what goes into that opening? I’ve heard several speakers start off with horror stories about their flights to the event, and it seems to me that these an-

ecdotes are neither relevant nor particularly interesting—to anybody except the speaker.”

Sue gestured to me.

“I agree with you,” I concurred. “Nobody in this room really cares how the flight attendant treated me yesterday, or that my bag got misplaced. I think it was Duncan who said, ‘Make every word count.’ So stay away from travel stories. Your opening is your most important opportunity to *connect* with the group. There are several ways to do that. In my case, I might note that the person who introduced me was a district governor the year I was Rotary International President, or that I feel so close to this district because of the support it has given to the Blindness Prevention campaign. It’s true what Sue said: you only have a minute or two to establish that bond, that link, which makes the audience think, *I really want to listen to this guy.*”

“If I may interject, I agree with Frank’s point,” said David. “I was at a national real estate convention a couple of years ago when the comedian Bill Cosby was the keynote speaker. Now Bill Cosby must speak at hundreds of events. But his opening on this occasion told the story of when he and his wife bought their first house in California. Of course, being Bill Cosby, he used facial expressions and humor to tell the audience *his* version of the experience, but he ended the vignette by saying how much he appreciated the work we all do. It was a funny, gripping, and relevant story to *that* audience. I must confess to you, I went into that convention center thinking, ‘Ho hum. Another off-the-shelf canned speech from a comedian.’ But I found myself paying rapt attention—all because of his opening.”

“What about questions? How do you handle them?” asked a man with a strong Italian accent.

“Duncan drew the table mike close. “I establish in the preparation stage how to deal with questions,” he began. “With a workshop like this, we worked it out months ago to make the morning interactive, to allow questions throughout the workshop. We decided how many mikes there should be, where they would be placed, and who we could ask to pass them around. That’s the logistical answer to your question. Now let me give you the tactical answer. You have the right, of course, to decide not to accept questions. This would be particularly appropriate if you are giving a short keynote address. But if you do take questions from the floor, I suggest you make a habit of paraphrasing it back so the entire audience knows what you are answering. Now, let me spend a minute to clarify my point. When I say *paraphrase*, I don’t mean repeat. Repeating it means you act like a parrot and say the same words as the questioner. But what if you didn’t understand exactly what he meant?”

“For example, let’s assume somebody asks me, ‘How many flights are there every day between New York and London?’ I might answer, ‘Twenty eight.’ But what the questioner really wanted to know was how many flights *my* airline operates between the two cities each day. If I had simply repeated her question, I would have given her the wrong answer. So I might restate her question in my own words: ‘So what you are asking is how many flights do all airlines combined operate each day between New York and London?’ Now she has the chance to correct me before I embarrass both of us by giving her the wrong answer.”

“I have been in situations where time is short and I know I won’t have time to answer every question,” I added. “It is disappointing for somebody to stand in line for questions, only to be told we are out of time. I’m sure you have all experienced

questioners who make a speech, or tell war stories instead of succinctly posing their question. So one way to overcome these problems is to ask them to write down their questions. The sergeant-at-arms then delivers them to the head table and a trusted aide—perhaps the governor—will sort through them and give me those he considers relevant, until my time expires. Incidentally, one final tip: never end your presentation with a question.”

“I’d like to go back to Sue’s point of the tone of your delivery,” said David. “For years, people have told me they hear my voice when they are reading my books. So it should be when they hear my speeches. What I am saying should reflect *my* personality, character, and beliefs. I love Frank, and Frank is a great speaker. But I should not try to sound like Frank Devlyn. *My* speech should contain *my* words. Oh, and let me just slip in a suggestion: I believe in using alliteration. It adds to the flowing delivery of your presentation, so without going overboard, I strongly suggest trying to include alliteration in your speech.”

“Perhaps you could explain what you mean by *alliteration*,” I asked.

“Sure,” David agreed. “Alliteration is where you use several consecutive words that all begin with the same consonant, so it has a poetic ring to the sentence—and makes it easier for the audience to remember. For example, Ron the reliable Realtor. Or, for that matter, that rhyme we all learned as children: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.”

Sue looked at the line standing at the floor mike. “Go ahead, sir. What is your question?”

“I am a District Governor-Elect [DGE] and came here today because I was terrified at having to speak in public. I

have taken pages of notes already, but how can I know if I am doing better?”

“Frank,” said Sue. “Let me toss this one to you.”

“If you are serious about improving your presentation skills, you should get some professional coaching,” I suggested. “There are speaking coaches out there. So the highest level of help would be to get your own coach. If you don’t want to invest that much time or money, I suggest you join a group like Toastmasters. They are all over the country—actually, all over the world—and I can attest from my personal experience how helpful their meetings are. Another good source is Dale Carnegie, and there are hundreds of local Dale Carnegie chapters that will provide counseling and advice to help you improve. But even if you choose not to go that far, you might find resources in your own district that will move your speaking skills to the next level. I know of some districts where part of their Governors-Elect Training Seminars requires the DGE to deliver a speech, which is videotaped and then critiqued by peers and senior leaders. The important thing is to *do something*: read a book, attend evening classes at your local community college, but do something!”

“If I may interject,” Bob added. “There have been times when I was asked to make presentations at trade conferences, and I would show up early to watch other presenters. By noticing their delivery style, and particularly what drew positive—and less enthusiastic—responses from the audience taught me a lot. It’s the same with Rotary district conferences. I treat the entire conference as a classroom and make notes of what works and what doesn’t as the speakers address the audience. I still refer to the notes I’ve taken at these events.”

“How important is dress?” asked the next person at the microphone.

“I almost never wear one,” Duncan replied, with a perfect deadpan expression. After pausing to let the laughter subside, he added: “Actually, I’m glad you asked that question. I try to dress one level above the audience. So during my *Know thy Audience* process if I find the attendees will be wearing jeans, I will dress in khakis and a collared sport shirt. If the audience will be wearing business casual, I dress in a suit. The message we send from our appearance is all part of the non-verbal signal Sue talked about.”

“Would you elaborate on your point about vocal tone,” asked the next questioner.

“David, would you take this one?” Sue suggested.

“Sure,” he agreed. “How somebody *hears* you is how they will *see* you long after you’ve stopped talking. So firstly, pay careful attention to your diction. Each word should be pronounced clearly and properly. So it is ‘Yes,’ not ‘Yeh;’ ‘I don’t know’ rather than ‘I dunno,’ and ‘Going to’ and not ‘Gonna.’ You have been chosen to speak, and that comes with the responsibility to speak properly, to enunciate your words clearly.

“Secondly, just as you learned that music comes in scales: *do, ray, me, fa, so, la, te, do*—so your speaking voice should gently rise and fall as your inflections make you sound interesting to your audience. Just as a musical audience does not want to hear an entire performance in only one note, so your listeners want to hear some words with variety in your spoken voice.

“Also, the larger the audience, the more you should slow yourself down. Finally, and this is especially true with large



audiences, be sure to project your voice. It is an easy trap to think you are talking to the people you can see clearest—in the front couple of rows. But if I do that, my voice will drop in volume and soon the people in the back of the room won't be able to hear me clearly. When I speak to a large audience, I pick something I can see way back there,"—he pointed towards the back of the room—"and I imagine I am talking to somebody sitting right there."

"Sue," said the next person at the microphone. "Would you please elaborate on what should be in the opening?"

"Sure," Sue began. "If you can find a way to praise the audience—just as David recalled Bill Cosby telling the audience of Realtors how helpful they had been to his family—that's good. You need to grip their attention with those opening words. I'm thinking on the fly here, but saying, 'Before our dinner together is over tonight, 53 children will have contracted polio—and seven of them will die from it.' would be an example of how I might open a PolioPlus speech. It got your attention, didn't it? It is what I call a *Problem-Solution Opening* where you first state the problem and then use the body of the speech to offer solutions. Was that more interesting to the audience than 'First, I'd like to say what a pleasure it is for me to be here in Des Moines, Iowa, tonight.'? It is a trite cliché and your audience has heard it a hundred times before. In fact, they are already beginning to tune you out and are thinking, 'Why would she say that? Why would she be so happy to be here in frigid Iowa today instead of being home in Florida with her family?' You see, your throwaway line in the opening has already brought your credibility into question.

"One time when I am more tolerant of the type of opening when you say what a pleasure it is to be there is if you

have had a previous connection with the area, or with the group. For example, you grew up there, or your spouse's family lives there. In such event, your statement is not a cliché because you are telling them *why* it is such a pleasure for you to be there.

"Telling a story is a good way to open a speech, so long as it relates to what comes next in the body of the talk. For example, if I was to give a talk on what Rotary is today, I might open by reflecting back on the impression a huge city of Chicago made on the quiet young country lawyer when he arrived there in 1905, and how his loneliness and desire for the trustworthy friends he had known all through his childhood led him to invite a small group of trusted business associates to dinner on that cold February night in 1905. Do you see what I mean that telling a captivating story will grab your audience's attention right from the beginning of your talk?"

"I am a little embarrassed at asking this," said a short man at the microphone. "But I have a rather high voice, and when I am nervous, I'm told it gets higher. Is there any way I can modulate that?"

Sue looked down the head table. There were no volunteers, so she called on David to answer the question.

"You shouldn't feel embarrassed, because almost all women and many male speakers do tend to speak in a higher tone," he said. "Many of us have watched speakers who speak in such a shrill voice that it's almost painful to our ears. But I know others who, right before they go on, will practice vocal exercises. You can do this backstage, or, if you are in a smaller setting, do it in the elevator, hallway, or even in the rest room—anyplace there are no people around you. Just as the giant said, start way down in the bottom of your

stomach and say, ‘Fe, fi, fo, fummmm.’ Repeat it several times, in descending tonal order, extending each word for a few seconds: *Feeee, Fiiiii, Foooooo, Fummmmmm*. I see some of you laughing at me, but my friends swear it works! You will train your voice to have a lower tone for the next several minutes.”

“Sue, we spent the whole morning talking about how to use our research to write the perfect speech, and then you began this segment saying how only seven percent of communications is accomplished by words. So are you really saying that words are not important?”

Sue looked dismayed, and to be honest, I could hardly believe the man could have been led to such a conclusion. Then again, I realized that in the real world, in an audience of this size, it would be statistically improbable not to have received at least one oddball question. *I wonder how she will handle this one*, I thought.

“I don’t for one moment want you to believe that words don’t matter,” she began. “Humorist Bill Maher once pointed out that when people on one side of the political debate use words like ‘Pro Life,’ it makes anybody who disagrees with them ‘Pro death,’ by definition. Look at such words as ‘The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,’ or, ‘I have a dream.’ Those are words—simple words—that helped change the mindset of an entire nation and are still seared into our emotions decades after they were spoken. ‘We hold these truths to be self evident and that all men are created equal.’ Are these just words? Are these unimportant words? I don’t think so! But what I’m saying—what all of us up here are saying—is that after you have put together the words for your presentation, you will dramatically increase the likelihood of them

being understood by your audience if you also *deliver* them in an energetic, dynamic way.”

To my surprise, her impassioned response drew applause from the entire audience. Sue hesitated for a few seconds and then continued, although from the tone of her voice, it was clear she had transitioned to a different point.

“Let me just finish with a couple of thoughts that came to mind. First, I thank you for your kind applause. Did you notice that I waited for your applause to finish before I resumed speaking? I see so many speakers do a great job with their presentations and get either laughter at something funny they say, or applause, and then they keep on talking over the audience’s response. If you are successful enough to get applause or laughter, it is impolite to continue speaking until their response has subsided.

“The second thing I wanted to emphasize—since we were just talking about words—is to remember that unless you are addressing a technical or academic audience, you should speak to *express*, not to *impress*. David, you use both spoken and written words every day, would you like to add something?”

“Sure,” he agreed. “Sue, I am so glad you added that advice. I heard a speaker recently talk about his business as a thriving *entrepôt*. I remember thinking, ‘Entrepôt? What on earth is an *entrepôt*?’ I could tell others were confused, too. I finally turned on my Blackberry and went online to find what the word meant. That is disaster for a speaker. You want your audience hanging on to every word you say, buying into your concepts and vision. The worst thing you can do is lose their attention for 10 minutes while you send them to the dictionary.

“Your delivery should use words, gestures, and body language that create a bond with your audiences and images they can easily see. Shakespeare wrote, ‘To gild refined gold, to paint a lily, to throw perfume on the violet.’ Everybody can picture what he was trying to convey—and every word was a simple one. You mentioned the banal openings that so many speakers use, about it being a pleasure to be here . . . *yuk!* Compare that to Churchill’s opening when he addressed Parliament in 1940: ‘I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister, in a solemn hour for the life of our country, our Empire, of our allies, and, above all, for the cause of freedom.’ So when you pick the words you are going to use, remember the greatest wordsmith of all time—Shakespeare—who wrote, ‘He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man.’<sup>1</sup>”

“I don’t want to belabor the point, but I would like to state you two have touched one of my hot buttons,” Duncan interjected. “My staff used to know my distaste for superfluous language and used it at their peril. Why use deceased when dead will do? Why say expedite instead of hurry, or remuneration rather than pay?” He rolled his eyes and pushed the table mike away. *Another good example of body language conveying his point*, I thought.

“Bob, I know you are going to handle the segment on closing, but before you come up here, let me just offer one more tip on delivery. Several of us today have mentioned how it is not good form to be looking down and reading a speech. You should try to master the art of scanning the key words on your flash cards or bulleted list as you move your head from side to

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<sup>1</sup> Benedeck in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II, Scene III

side. You see, as I scan from the left of the room to the right, did any of you notice that I momentarily looked at the lectern as I moved past center?”

I noticed a few heads indicating they had not. “You see, I did not drop my head, I simply moved my eyes down. Incidentally, that’s why it is important to use large fonts and key words, rather than a detailed text that needs to be read verbatim. Anyway, I want you to give a speech—even if it is to an empty room—and to videotape yourself. Then replay the tape and count the number of times you dropped your head to read something. They are called ‘Eye drops.’ Now do it again, and again, and again. Your goal is to deliver that speech with fewer and fewer eye drops. You see, sometimes we do have to look down to refer to a key statistic, or a name, or just to see that we are on track. But those should be few and far between, and you still don’t have to lose eye contact with your audience—you can glance down as you move your head from side to side. Okay, we’ve talked about the importance of the opening, how to improve your delivery, and now Bob will discuss how we can leave them wanting more. Bob, come up here and tell us how to deliver a great close to our speech.”

Bob walked up to the lectern and smiled broadly at the audience. “I am sure that right now some of you are thinking, ‘We’re ready for a closing.’ Taking his cue from Sue’s advice, Bob paused for a few seconds as laughter trickled through the audience. It had been a long morning.

“So, Sue asked me to talk about the part of your speech we call the closing. The goal of the closing part of your speech is to have the audience jump to their feet in enthusiastic applause—not for them to look at one another asking, ‘Is he done?’ Let me paint a word picture for you. You book a flight and get a

really good deal on ABC Airlines. The check-in agent at the airport was so helpful; the flight left on time, and you had a lovely, smooth flight during which the flight attendants delivered some of the best service you have ever experienced. You landed 10 minutes ahead of schedule . . . *Boy! ABC Airlines is great, right?* Then you wait at baggage claim for 45 minutes, only to be told your bag was misrouted to Rome and won't be here for two days. Right now, what do you think of ABC Airlines? Many people would be telling folks months later about how ABC messed up their trip and how they'll never fly them again. My point in this story is that even if the message was crafted brilliantly, you had a great opening, and your delivery was superb, your closing is how people will remember you.

"Earlier this morning, you heard the admonition: *Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em; tell 'em, and then tell 'em what you just told 'em.* I like that advice, and if you follow it, you know your closing should be a summary of what the key points in your message were. Speaking of 'summary,' let me just interject that I don't like speakers who say 'In conclusion,' or 'In summary.' That sends a signal that your message is about to end, and for every second that follows, the audience is thinking 'Is this it? I thought he said he was about to be done.' You should have a seamless segue into your closing, which you can subtly signal by a change in your tone, or by saying something like, 'So what does this mean for you and for me?'

"I joked a moment ago about some of you being really ready for the closing of our workshop. Let me give you a reality check: with the possible exception of your mother, almost everybody wishes you had spoken for a little less time. It has been said that the perfect after-dinner speech is the shortest distance between two jokes. We have suggested today that you stay away from telling jokes in your speeches, but as part

of your recipe for success, do remember that the best ingredient for public speakers is the shortening. A great speech contains a good beginning and a good closing—preferably close together.

“So how should we construct and deliver our closing?” Bob stopped speaking for a full five seconds and scanned the audience. “By now, you are all pros and perhaps you noticed what I just did: I used the power of the pause to get your attention, and then I used a question to signal my transition from the opening part of my current presentation to the main body. You see, we cannot expect the audience to get to the ‘how’ until you tell them the ‘why.’ You have just spent, say, five minutes explaining the ‘why’ during your opening, and then 15 minutes on your three main points, or however you structured the main body of your speech. Now, as you begin your close, you must give your audience a summary that reviews the main thoughts and ideas from the body. By now, your goal should be for the listener to be thinking, ‘Yes! I know what she means.’ ‘Sure, I can understand his reasoning.’”

“Then, just as Sue talked about the importance of a strong opening statement, it is vital that you finish your speech with something that conveys a sense of drama, emotion, and completeness. Don’t be like the preacher whose parishioners drive home saying, ‘Now, what was his sermon about?’ Let me say, there is no one magic formula for ending a speech. You could bring it full circle by restating your opening, particularly if you had a thought-provoking or poetic memory line at the beginning. You could end with a quotation that reinforces your main point. You could end with a call to action: ‘Let me challenge each person here tonight to . . .’ or a question: ‘This program is not about *caring*, for I know you all care about those who are



homeless. The question is not whether we care; it is whether we care enough to act. Do we? Do we? Do *you* care enough to be a part of the solution?’

“I have just given you several tips on what *should* be in a close; let me suggest what the closing should *not* include. Never end on a joke. Never introduce a new idea or concept in your closing; this is the time for you to reiterate what you have already told them, not to make them think about something different and new. If this was a date, you have already had dinner and a movie; this is the goodnight kiss—but long after we forget what we ate for dinner, we will remember the kiss!

“And then always, let them see a sincere gesture of gratitude at being given the privilege of speaking to them. And so I say to each of you, and to you, Frank, this has been a real honor to be able to speak here today. I am not a professional speaker. I am simply one ordinary, grass-roots Rotarian; one who didn’t come to teach, but to learn. So thank you for your invitation and your warm welcome.” There was thunderous applause as Bob walked back to his seat at the head table, waving his gratitude in acknowledgement.

“When I was in Toastmasters, I learned another type of very effective close,” I began. “As you’ve heard several times today, people love to hear stories. So you can take a story that has two parts, and split them. Tell the first part during your opening. That might be the part that tells about the problem. I might tell you about a little girl a friend of mine met in Bosnia who had lost both her legs after stepping on a land mine. In the opening, I would tell you all about her: her name, her age, how it happened, how it stopped her from going to school or from her ambition to be a nurse—but I would stop the story

to go into the body of my speech. That is when I might talk about Rotarians and Rotary clubs that have addressed the terrible problem of land mine victims, and the artificial limbs that these Rotarians are providing through Rotary Foundation grants. Then in my closing, I would say, ‘And remember little Christina? Let me tell you the rest of the story.’ Many of you here can recall the radio commentator Paul Harvey who became famous by telling ‘the rest of the story.’ There is nothing more powerful than to end a speech with an inspiring anecdote that ties your entire talk together and which the audience will remember long after the applause has died down. I looked down the head table. Anybody have a thought they’d like to share? David?

“I do believe one of the most important things for us to remember is the time,” he said. “Many of you have been club presidents when you had a speaker run overtime, and I know what you were thinking: ‘My club members are going to kill me for this!’ You will almost always run longer than when you practiced your speech in the sterile environment at home alone. Always leave them wanting more. You never want to be known as ‘the guy who went on and on.’ When I am given, say, 25 minutes to speak, I plan to talk for 20 or 21 minutes. If there are other speakers before you and one of them runs long, the conference chair may ask you if you can cut your talk down—and you will be a hero if you volunteer to do so. For that reason, I often have two closes ready: one with a story and one with a more succinct, but memorable quote. I know that by switching from the anecdote to the quote I can save three minutes.”

Bob walked back to the lectern, carrying a file folder. “This is the part where I am not supposed to admit that I forgot to have this with me when I was here before. But

when Frank asked me to talk about the close, I did some research and wanted to share with you the final lines of some of the greatest speeches in history. Listen to these, and see how they exemplify the advice we have given you this morning.

When Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior gave his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, he ended it this way:

‘And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro

spiritual, “Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

“And here is how President Kennedy closed his Inaugural Address:

‘And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.’

“Finally, many of us remember that awful January day in 1986 when the Challenger exploded just after liftoff. That evening, the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, spoke to the nation. Here is how he closed that hastily-prepared speech:

‘There’s a coincidence today. On this day 390 years ago, the great explorer Sir Francis Drake died aboard ship off the coast of Panama. In his lifetime the great frontiers were the oceans, and a historian later said, ‘He lived by the sea, died on it, and was buried in it.’ Well, today we can say of the Challenger crew: Their dedication was, like Drake’s, complete.

The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for the journey and waved goodbye and ‘slipped the surly bonds of earth’ to ‘touch the face of God.’

Thank you.”

“And on March 23, 1775, as the American colonists were in the midst of their struggle for independence, Patrick Henry made one of history’s most famous speeches, for which he chose the stirring closing words:

‘Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take but as for me give me liberty or give me death.’

“More than two hundred and thirty years later, few Americans can remember what was in the rest of Patrick Henry’s speech, but citizens of every age can still recite his close.” Bob closed his file folder and returned to his seat.

“Friends, family of Rotary,” I said, I see from the clock that our time is over, and yet I also notice we have several people standing at the microphone. So here is what I am going to do. I will consider our workshop to be over, and I thank all of you for coming. I do hope it was helpful to you. However, since all of us have time before our next commitment, I will allow anybody who does want to ask questions to do so . . . until the sergeant-at-arms comes to evict us from the room. So, if you wish to stay, you are most welcome to do so. And if you have to leave, we thank you for coming.”

There was applause, and at least half the room gave a standing ovation. I waited for the noise to subside and then asked the first person in line to ask her question.

## CHAPTER 5



# Questions and Answers

*“What lies behind us and what lies before us are  
tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”*

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

“I am the best man at a wedding next month and have to give a toast to the bride and groom,” the first man at the mike revealed. “I don’t know if you even call that ‘public speaking,’ but would you give us a little insight in how long we should allow for things like toasts and keynotes and so on? And when you give us the time in minutes, how many words does that equate to?”

“Of course, there is no hard and fast rule,” I answered. “As we mentioned earlier this morning, you should always ask the person who invited you how much time he or she wants you to speak. That said, as a very general rule, a keynote address is about 20-25 minutes, a motivational speech about 20 minutes, I would say about 5-8 minutes for a ceremony, such as the dedication of something, or the presentation of an award, and for a wedding toast, usually about three to four minutes. Oh, and how many words, you asked? Of course, that depends on how

fast you speak. The average person speaks at about 120 words a minute, so under that assumption, a wedding toast—written out—would be about 450-480 words; a dedication ceremony about 900 to 1,000 words; and a motivational or keynote address about 2,400 words. But remember my caveat: find out how long they *want* you to speak, and then, if you insist on writing your speech and reading it verbatim, time yourself to determine your own delivery speed.”

“Frank, I usually type my speech and then three-hole punch it and keep it in a ring binder. Are you saying that is wrong?”

“I am not saying anything is ‘wrong,’ *per se*,” I responded. If it works for, you, I suppose that is fine. But our purpose here today is to help you be *more* effective speakers. And if I am in the audience watching a guy at the lectern reading from a speech, and making it so obvious that I can even see him turning the pages every minute or so, you are not going to *connect* with me. You are no longer somebody that is engaging me, enthralling me, inspiring me: you are some guy reading a paper. If you absolutely do have to have your text typed, at least keep the pages loose so you can simply slide the page to the left when you’ve finished it—and so the audience doesn’t start counting the pages as you read from them.”

“Frank, would you address the subject of introductions and thanks. What is the proper way for us to introduce a speaker, and how should we thank the person afterwards?”

“Oh, I’m glad you brought that up,” I said, with perhaps a little too much enthusiasm. “One of my pet peeves is how people handle introductions. They should ask the speaker how he or she wants to be introduced, and if you are the speaker, you should provide a typed introduction in advance—and carry an extra copy with you. I frequently



show up at a conference and see my entire bio in the program booklet, and then as I am about to go on, the introducer reads the entire bio page to the audience. It is ridiculous. I provide a very brief, bullet-pointed summary of my reason for being there. The audience came to hear *me*, not the guy reading the introduction. So that leads into another beef I have: when the introducer goes way off script and extemporaneously tells about everything the speaker has ever done and builds him or her up to be a candidate for sainthood. After that, it is embarrassing to even take the podium. The introduction should do four things: address an issue or subject pertinent to that audience; establish the speaker's credentials for being there; generate anticipation about his presence, and to communicate the audience's appreciation for the speaker's presence. Then turn the spotlight to the speaker. It should last less than a minute. And *please* avoid such clichés as 'And now the man who needs no introduction.' If he needs no introduction, why are you wasting everybody's time up there introducing him, you idiot?

"As to your second question, if the speaker has done everything Bob just suggested and made an uplifting, memorable close, don't ruin it all by having somebody ramble on and on about what a wonderful speaker he was and how great it was to have him here, and so on. That's about as anticlimactic as you can get. Fifteen to thirty seconds, max: 'Thank you so much for those inspiring words, I know I speak for all of us when I say we will long remember your visit with us tonight, and will carry your call to action in our hearts for a long time to come. Thank you again, Joe.'

"Frank, how do you prepare for the times when you are asked to give impromptu remarks and haven't had time to prepare for it," asked a lady at the microphone.

“I’m going to pass this one on. David, how would you address that,” I asked.

“By thinking ahead. By being proactive,” he began. “Think about what you might be asked to speak about. Obviously, in my case, nobody is going to ask me to speak on the subject of nuclear medicine or the history of the Brooklyn Bridge. They might ask me about Rotary, about my profession: real estate; about the orphanage that we started and run, in Romania. So let’s start with those three subjects. I know from my experience that people are very interested in those topics, and I have some expertise in them. Now begin by creating what I call my elevator speech. I pretend I am on an elevator and the person sees my Rotary pin. ‘What is Rotary all about?’ she asks me. I only have until the elevator reaches the ground floor to succinctly and eloquently tell her the high points of Rotary. I obviously can’t tell her everything about Rotary, but what could I say that would leave her impressed enough that perhaps she would want to join—or support our work? That’s my elevator speech. Now, take that and expand it to make it a five minute talk. What would I say? And once I have a five minute talk, it can easily become a 10-minute talk—and I am prepared to tell the story, whether to a person I meet on an airplane, or to give the speech at a club I’m visiting when the guest speaker doesn’t show up that day. I can tell you of occasions all over the world: from the Republic of Moldova to Adelaide, Australia when that has happened. And it all starts with an elevator speech. Every one of us should compose an elevator speech!”

David sat back from the microphone as the next audience member began her question. “I am a club president, and it frustrates me when I try to have a question-and-answer time and cannot get anybody to begin. What should I do?”

“Sue,” I said. “We haven’t heard from you for a while. How would you answer that?”

“I know exactly where you’re coming from,” she said, looking reassuringly at the questioner. “There are a couple of ways to handle that. First, you can go in advance to a one or two people you trust in the audience and ask them, in the event there are no immediate questions, to be ready to jump in themselves. The second way is for you to wait a few seconds, scanning the audience, but to them prime the pump: say, ‘You know, one question that people often ask me is ...’ I think you will find that there *are* questions out there, it is just human nature that most people don’t want to be the first one to ask.”

“I know you will laugh at my question, but I am also a club president, and we have one member, Bob, who falls asleep at every meeting. We begin at 6:30 and have eaten dinner by about 7:15, at which time the club announcements are made. And guaranteed, every Tuesday night, Bob is asleep by 7:30—precisely when the guest speaker is being introduced. So how do I solve the Bob problem?” There was laughter throughout the room at this one.

“Well, since we have a Bob on the panel, let me hand this one to him. Bob, how do you solve the Bob Problem?”

“Suggest he join a breakfast club,” he said, with a smirk.

“You are no help,” I said, with a grimace. “Duncan, any ideas?”

“Of course, if he was one of my employees, I would have a bigger stick,” he began. “I suppose you could quietly talk to him about how it looks. But you don’t want Bob to get so embarrassed that he quits the club. Maybe he could agree to sit

toward the back of the room, or maybe an arrangement could be worked out where his friends sitting next to him could nudge him if they saw him dropping off. But let's look at the bigger picture. Is Bob a good Rotarian? Does he pay his dues and maintain good attendance and participate in your club's projects? If so, maybe the easiest thing is to recognize that we all have our little shortcomings and personality differences, and just let Bob be Bob."

"You mentioned being proactive; anticipating how you would react if something went wrong. Can you give us examples of things that didn't work out the way they should have during your speaking experiences?" asked the next woman in line, adding: "Oh, and how would proactive thinking have resolved those problems?"

"I think we all have examples of that," I said. "I can remember a number of occasions when I was snowed in at airports en route to a speaking engagement. And I can't even tell you how many times the airlines have cancelled flights or delayed me so that I missed a connection. So I never book the last flight of the day, even in the best weather. And when there is a significant chance of disrupted flights, I try to fly in earlier in the day or the night before. On the other side of the table, if I were the conference organizer, I would also be thinking, 'What if?' Especially if I were hosting speakers from out of town, I would always have a contingency plan in case one of them wasn't able to make it."

"During the formal banquet on the Saturday evening of my district conference, the hotel's fire alarm went off—three times," said Sue. "So three times, the entire audience was evacuated from the building. I would never have anticipated such a thing, but as we were waiting outside in

the cold the second time, I quickly calculated how much time we had lost and then eliminated some of the announcements, asked the Rotary International President's representative if he could cut his speech by 10 minutes, and we managed fine."

"I used to wear a wireless lapel mike when I had to make presentations to large company employee groups," said Duncan. "On at least a couple of occasions, the battery ran down either before, or during my talk. From that lesson I learned to always put in a new battery before I speak, and to have another new one in my briefcase as a backup."

"I think the key is to maintain your cool and not let the audience see you uncertain or panicking. I remember giving a whole-day seminar in New York one time when water started leaking onto the audience from the ceiling. A few minutes later, a hotel employee came in and apologized in a loud voice, explaining that a sewer line had broken! No amount of proactive thinking could have prepared one for the possibility that raw sewage might spill over 30 people in my audience. But they see you as the leader, and you need to maintain control of the room. That said, having a flexible attitude and a sense of humor can go a long way in resolving unanticipated problems."

"You very briefly touched on the use of PowerPoint slides, and it seemed the panel was generally opposed to using them. Do you ever make exceptions to that rule?"

"I'll take this one, if you like," volunteered Bob. "I don't think any of us told you not to use PowerPoint. What we said was that if you are called on to make a speech, give a speech. If your presentation can be more effective by using collateral material, such as slides, then go ahead and do so. But don't

rely on the slides as your main channel of communications. There are times when PowerPoint makes a great accompaniment to your talk, but let me suggest a couple of tips when you do:

“First, don’t put too many words on the screen. PowerPoint works best when you show a graphic, a picture, or, when you do show text on the slide, use as few words as possible, preferably in a bullet-pointed or numbered list. I suggest no more than three to five bullet points per slide.

“Second, explain only one idea or concept per slide.

“If you do use slides and want to use color in either the font or the background, test them by looking at the screen from the back of the room. You want to ensure your slides can be easily read.

“And finally, never stand there and read to the audience everything you’ve put on the slides.”

Letting the audience see you looking at your watch is bad form, so if I don’t see a wall clock that will alert me to the time, I place my watch on the lectern where I can casually glance at it. I did so now and realized it was time to bring the workshop to a close. “My friends,” I began. “We came together this morning to talk about this art form we call public speaking. We talked about why it is important for all of us, whether we aspire to higher office in Rotary or in the business world, to be able to eloquently and effectively present our plans and vision to others. Yet we learned not only from published research but also from the community here in this room, that most people have a dread fear of doing so.

“Over the past three hours, we have shared ideas on how to alleviate those fears. Then we heard why it is im-

portant to research our audience and our topic, and we spent a long time talking about *how* to craft a great speech. We learned how to construct the speech in three distinct parts: the opening, the main body, and the close, using the old newspaper reporter's maxim of the *Five W's* for organizing our thoughts: who, what, why, when, and where? Then we heard several great tips on how to improve our delivery. We talked about never ending with questions, so our question and answer period is over. Instead, we heard how one of the most effective ways to close a presentation is with a call to action. So I am going to end our time together today by doing exactly what the panel taught us: by telling a story and issuing a call to action.

"Once upon a time, there was a flock of turkeys that wanted to learn how to fly. So they attended a seminar—much like the one we are in today. All morning long, they heard from some of the best flight instructors in the country, and they took copious notes on the aerodynamics of flight, lift and drag, and short-field takeoffs & landings. Then, after lunch, the seminar leader took all the turkeys up to the roof of the hotel and they jumped off. It was an amazing sight! They dove and soared and glided and had the *best* time with their new skills. Then they returned to the meeting room, got their graduation certificates . . ." I paused and scanned the room. The entire audience sat looking at me in silent anticipation. I spoke slowly, clearly enunciating each syllable: ". . . and then, they all walked home. My Rotary friends, you came here today to learn a skill. You can act like the turkeys and file away the notes you took, never committing to improve your proficiency, or you can fly higher than you ever imagined you could. I hope to be in the audience when one of *you* is the keynote speaker sometime soon. On behalf

of all of us up here, thanks for being such a great audience. Today, we have Created Awareness. Now it is time for *you* to Take Action.”



Rotarian Stanley Togikawa from Honolulu Hawaii writes: My Shiraki Memorial Foundation has partnered with MSNI for over 15 years in sending over 35 sea containers of medical supplies and used medical

equipment as humanitarian aid primarily to South East Asia countries. The items sent have been in excellent condition and we appreciate that the equipment is received at no cost to them!



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## APPENDIX



# Reports from the Field

**R**otarians around the world were asked the following questions.

1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them so?
2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen. What made them so?
3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?
4. What presentation skills would be helpful to Rotarians?

**Here is an edited collection of their responses:**

■ **Wilfred Wilkinson, President, Rotary International, 2007-2008**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them so?**

I would like to offer six persons:

The first is the assistant coach of my high school football team. He would give us the big pitch before the game, and at half time, and we charged onto the field with a desire to win.

2) Bishop Fulton Sheen who hit the TV screen I think in the late 40's or early 50's. He was able to reduce the mysteries of my Catholic Faith into understandable examples and with convincing arguments.

3) Richard Evans whose speech about Rotary based on the “Sermon on the Mount” was the highlight of my attendance at the International Assembly in Lake Placid back in 1971. He managed to show how following the ideals of Rotary was the way to capture all directives of that famous sermon.

4) Cliff Dochterman who has the ability to put his audience at ease with his humor while he is delivering a very important message.

5) Bhichai Rattakul because of his commanding voice. His diction is perfect and he leaves you hanging on each word.

6) John Kennedy because he spoke with such authority as the USA emerged as one of two super powers, it seemed to me as a very close neighbor, anytime he spoke Canadians should listen.

(Needless to say I’ve had the pleasure of hearing many great Rotary speakers including Frank Devlyn and Rick King but I’m sure that others have spoken about them, however the above are my first choices.)

## **2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen. What made them so?**

The worse speakers are those who have an important message but just don’t know how to get it out. Interesting enough, I know District Governors who are poor communicators who decide to adopt their own Theme and speech, after receiving the best possible one during the International Assembly. It is like they have made up their mind and couldn’t care what their International President, with staff support, was developing.

A speaker who stutters or repeats himself, or say “eh” or “the” constantly, quickly turns an audience off.

However the speaker who might have good delivery but insists on talking down to his audience or uses sexist remarks is a loser, in my opinion. Finally the speaker who just can’t tell a joke but insists on trying bothers me. Nine times out of ten he flubs the punch line. Please save me.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary has always been a forum where people who had little or no leadership skills are able to develop them. We learn from our associates who might have those skills but more important we become committed to projects that help others. When you have confronted the problem face to face or participated in its solution you can speak about it from the heart. That is what audiences expect from a speaker, that they speak from the heart, particularly if they are not a great orator. The other important thing, if you are not an orator, is to keep it short.

**4. What presentation skills would be helpful to Rotarians?**

Well Rotary's core values include Leadership. Leadership doesn't necessarily require oratorical proficiency but it is important to be able to get your point across. Training can be formal or it can be acquired by rubbing shoulders with the right Men and Women. Rotary provides that opportunity at every meeting if one is willing to take advantage of it.

**■ Raja Saboo, President, Rotary International, 1991-92:**

"Some of the best speakers I have heard and admired had the ability to penetrate the hearts and minds of the audience. One was the eminent jurist and lawyer Nani Palkhiwala who also was once India's Ambassador to the U.S. His oratory was absolutely masterly. You give him 20 minutes or 30 minutes or even 10 minutes he would not look at his watch and finish in time, covering a subject in a most eloquent manner. He was regarded as one of the top lawyers of his time in our country. His memory was photogenic.

The other two speakers from India that I had the privilege of hearing were Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa. They were not outstanding speakers when judged by the normal standards of public speaking but when they spoke they truly touched the

hearts of the people. This was because of their personal example and the sincerity with which they conveyed their message.

Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela were both outstanding and excelled in what they had to say. Bill Clinton had the art of delivery, photogenic memory and substance in what he said. Nelson Mandela had probably everything and would probably be regarded as an all-time great.

Amongst Rotarians, there are many outstanding leaders from those who are living. Amongst those who have passed away, the man I admired most for speaking and leaving a deep imprint was Jim Bomar. I rate Bill Carter and Stan McCaffrey very high also. Carlos Canseco was a special person whose art of communicating was unparalleled. Although he was known for long speeches he knew the art of getting his message across his audience with utmost sensitivity. I learned a number of things watching and listening him.

Your next question is what I have admired in these speakers. Every speaker had his/her strength but the most important factor was the sincerity and language of heart which was truly understood by the people in the audience. Some of those probably did not go through formal training in public speaking but by the very fact that they had a message to convey and they personally believed and lived in what they said made them earn utmost respect from the audience.

The other thing I noticed amongst these outstanding speakers has been that they captured the audience in the very first 5 minutes, and in doing so, everybody listened to them with glued ears.

When I became club president I was a very reluctant speaker. In fact, even to conduct a meeting I found myself speechless, nervous to the core, at times.

Whatever public speaking I can do now is all a gift of Rotary. I have not gone through any formal training on public speaking but have learned by watching people, seeing the sensitivity of

the audience to a speaker and analyzing what would keep the listeners interested. I would put myself as part of the audience and then try to judge what would make me pay rapt attention. I used to practice much, never accepted the compliments of the audience as the gospel truth but appreciated the healthy critic comments of [my wife] Usha.

Through experience I developed the six “s” required for effective public speaking. In the order of priority these are:

1. Sincerity
2. Substance
3. Sensitivity with the audience
4. Short in length (this has not been my forté)
5. Simplicity (this applies to the language, delivery and in a way reflection of one’s personality)
6. Style (You must be youreself and not copy someone you are not. Also, you have to know how to express yourself with your body language. This all comes in one’s own style that you alone can develop).

I have also felt that a good presentation is one that leaves an impact on the listener. Thus its closing must be on a high note.

■ **M.A.T. Caparas, President, Rotary International, 1986 - 87:**

“I will try as best I can to do what you ask, even if it makes me look like that comic character who says, “I have nothing to say, and I will not say it more than once.” I have had the misfortune of hearing people who had nothing to say but say it more than once. So, that is the first rule I impose on myself—not to waste other people’s time saying things not worth saying. And the second rule is not to use five words where one will do.

You ask me to name the good speakers I know or knew. The three really good ones in the present Rotary scene are Cliff Dochterman, Rick King, and Bhichai Rattakul, not necessarily

in that order. You know them all, and I am sure you agree, so you can identify the reasons for their excellence.

The best Rotary speakers I have heard who are no longer with us are Jack Pride (PRIVP 1978-79), PRIP Richard Evans, and PRIP Bill Huntley. He could rouse and stir one to action in the same quiet, simple way as the great Richard Evans of radio, but with language so elegant as to be nothing less than Shakespearean.”

■ **Phil Silvers, Tucson, Arizona, USA; Director, Rotary International:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them so?**

Cliff Dochterman, of course. He does his research, works and re-works his content, applies creativity, and has great humor.

Bill Boyd. He has a conversation with you. Uses no podium; no notes—just talks. He delivers information and inspiration. Bill does need to crank up his volume a bit.

Ray Klingensmith. Talks from the heart. Has more Rotary program experience than any incoming Rotary president has ever had. No podium; no notes. Provides insights into Rotary’s greatness and future potential.

Kathleen Silvers. An exquisite story teller. Uses personal experiences to illustrate the significance of what Rotarians do.

Bhichai Rattakul. Personal stories. Inspirational/spiritual. Rotary’s Dhali Lama.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen. What made them so?**

Those who read their speeches, Dochterman is an exception.

Those who do not say anything new; do not inspire

Those who lecture—tell us what we need to do.

Those who use PowerPoint as a crutch, and do it badly.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Practice. Our Zones 21 & 27 GETS puts the DGEs on camera. They see themselves on tape, and hear comments from their peers. Two iterations. We see dramatic improvements in two days. They tell their personal stories—what Rotary means to them.

**4. What presentation skills would be helpful to Rotarians?**

How to use (and not abuse) a microphone. Rule number 1: Be heard; don't irritate.

Appropriate use of humor, and what to avoid.

Use squirt guns to get rid of 'uhms' and 'ahs'

Architecture. How to design and construct an effective speech.

How to give them ideas that they can use. The old "Transfer of training" concept.

**■ Rafael G. Hechanova, Manila, Philippines;  
Rotary International Director 1996-98:**

I can truthfully say that Frank Devlyn is one of the best speakers I have heard *because he relates to the audience immediately*. Another good speaker I have heard is former Philippine Senator Juan Flavio Vitorica who intersperses his message with funny comments. He spoke at the Taipei Rotary International Convention 1994 and had everyone in laughter for 20 minutes.

I believe that learning to speak extemporaneously will help us Rotarian speakers to be more effective. This can be done through participation in club meetings as moderators, finemasters or as speaker of one's vocation.

■ **Kelly C. Atkinson, PDG, District 5420, Utah, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

I have heard several hundred speakers and President Bill Clinton, President Ronald Reagan, President Jimmy Carter, Zig Ziglar, and Cavett Roberts are among the best.

**2. What made them so?**

A good speech or talk always has three common denominators—1) the speaker makes a connection with his/her audience. He or she communicates through eye contact, smiles, acknowledges the audience in some way, and does not just read from a sheet of paper. 2) The speaker inspires the audience either through high minded language or ideals (Gettysburg Address), or humor, making it a delight and pleasure to listen to the address. 3) the speaker talks to his audience with a purpose—to inform, to call to action, to move—and the audience is left no doubt what the speaker is requesting or intending from his/her address. Otherwise, the speech is just an address or meaningless communication.

**3. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen.**

Lack of enthusiasm, no connection with the audience, no eye contact, no fluctuations in the speaking patterns, boring.

**4. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Due to the sheer volume of addresses and the opportunity to make presentations, a person can't help but be a better communicator, a better listener, a better speaker by becoming a Rotarian.

■ **Antonio Hallage, Rotary International Director, 2010-1012:**

1) The best speakers I heard had different styles: Winston Churchill, Steve Jobs; Carlos Lacerda, among others. In my opinion what made them excellent was: they begun their speeches strongly,



they told the truth, they talked about personal experiences, and used understandable phrases.

2) The worst speakers were those who were not telling the truth but were trying to convince the audience they were; those with negative messages, and those who did not have any idea about the subject they were speaking about.

3) Rotary is an organization that helps its members to become better persons. In this process one acquires personal and humanitarian experience and is frequently asked to speak about them in one's club, community, and professional environment. This automatically increases their speaking skills.

4) I like allways to speak on what I consider the 3 Golden Rules of public speaking:

1st) Know more about the subject you are about to speak, than what you are going to speak;

2nd) Think on what you are speaking , while you are speaking

3rd) Have a great determination to say what you want to say and the message you want to give.

## ■ **William T. Sergeant, Past Rotary International Vice President:**

### **1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them so?**

Richard Evans, James Bomar, Clifford Dochterman, Paulo Costa, Bichai Rattakul, Franklin D. Roosevelt. [They] were superb speakers with clear messages, beautiful delivery and clever, insightful phrases. I always especially admired Rotary speakers who spoke in a language other than English and still inspired a standing ovation when 75% of the audience relied only on the translation (such as Rattakul and Costa). The greatest speech I ever read was Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen. What made them so?**

A host of speakers who spoke in monotones, or for too long, or with highly technical words—or all of the above.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

In Rotary, one hears speeches nearly weekly; people from all walks of life who display nearly all the good and bad traits. Furthermore, if you are active, you will have an opportunity to hone your own skills, a little at a time, but continuously.

**4. What presentation skills would be helpful to Rotarians?**

- Stick to subjects you know about from personal experience.
- Remember: no short speech is ever bad. (Have you ever heard an audience member say “that was a good speech, but it was too short.”?)
- Beware of idioms, technical terms, acronyms, abbreviations,
- Consider selecting stories from personal experience. They tend to be interesting and meaningful. Besides, most audiences are attracted to the announcement that a story in coming—as they expect it to be short!

**■ Ian Riseley, Past Rotary International Director and Treasurer:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them so?**

Some of the best speakers I have heard have been Rotary leaders, and that is not surprising because Rotary has given them many opportunities to hone their craft. As well as Past President Frank, Cliff Dochterman and Bhichai Rattakul are outstanding examples. Outside of Rotary, a great Australian by the name of Eva Burrows, who was world leader of the Salvation Army, was a magnificent speaker.

In addition to the basics of clarity and presentation, they are all wonderful speakers because they have passion for their subject. They engage the audience with humour and interesting anecdotes, and any visual aides are attractive. They are well planned, properly rehearsed and brief.

**2. Describe some of the WORST speakers you have seen. What made them so?**

The worst speakers are those who miss some excellent opportunities to sit down.

They move around at the microphone, and the audience is so mesmerised by the speaker's nervous dancing that they fail to absorb whatever message is in the words. Such speakers show uncertainty with the subject matter and exhibit no enthusiasm for it. If they are not blessed with a mellifluous voice, they compound the problem by speaking in a monotone.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

One of the benefits of being a Rotarian is personal development. A Rotary club is a supporting environment in which members are encouraged, even required, to speak in the public environment of their club and elsewhere, and their performance is improved by the practice they receive. Also, they are able to benefit by witnessing good speakers in action. Confidence is everything.

**4. What presentation skills would be helpful to Rotarians?**

The importance of clarity in their diction, the need to avoid “um,” “ah” and “you know,” the value of a pause and the need for thorough research of a topic and rehearsal of a presentation.

Good luck with the latest in the Frank Talk series. I encourage all Rotarians, especially newer members, to read them.

■ **Dr. John G. Thorne, Past Director, Rotary International:**

1. A couple of really great speakers in Rotary I have heard are—Past Presidents Bill Huntley and Royce Abbey. The main reason I enjoyed their talks was that I genuinely thought they were talking to me—personally. The second reason is that when they used stories or anecdotes this was directly relevant to the theme of the oration.
2. There are many Rotary speakers and others who have not impressed because they were more interested in themselves as orators or their topic than me as the listener. There are a couple of speakers in Rotary now who are highly entertaining but it seems they are just that—entertaining. Maybe they should be on the Night Club circuit as entertainers!
3. Rotary membership needs to help members become better at presentation skills BECAUSE all Rotarians have to (must) present Rotary better to ourselves, but more importantly to the public—in our work places, in social situations, in sport situations. Perhaps it is because we present our story so badly people are not impressed and do not support or join us.
4. Here are some tips off the top of my head that come to me first:
  - establish rapport with the audience from the very start
  - jokes are really not a great idea—many jokes are at the expense of someone!
  - Get the delivery right—tempo, vitality, enthusiasm
  - minimize distractions—that might mean no PowerPoint!
  - dress in the same fashion as the audience
  - enjoy speaking—don't make it sound like a drudge
  - speak distinctly—clearly—indeed, I always try to make delivery speed just a little slower than my normal speaking rate—often afterward s people come to me and comment on the clarity of presentation.

- keep it as short as sensible—and keep to time within the whole program
- however if the Chairman tries to shorten your time unreasonably—be prepared to negotiate
- in preparation to be CUT, I always put marks on a few paragraphs that can be omitted IF necessary. Be prepared for that demand to cut your time by “x” minutes.
- avoid traps such as—
  - reading from notes—rather than engaging with the audience ... OK to have notes, but one must always regard the audience as the most important thing at that time
  - don’t compete with distractions—other noise; giving out papers, jingling keys, too much gesture
- Summarize important points—maybe do this a couple of times
- Reinforce the message at the end—then conclude strongly.

I genuinely believe that preparation of a logical speech is paramount. Rambling, even by an expert on any topic is not retained.

From the listener’s perspective a clear speech that develops points in a logical straight-forward manner makes sense and then aids retention of the subject matter—and that is the point.

■ **Barry Rassin, FACHE, Rotary International Director 2006-08:**

A great speaker has to be relaxed and NOT reading a speech. He/She has to be comfortable with the topic, confident and able to connect with the audience. Humor is important but jokes are wrong. Eye contact and enthusiasm are essential. I believe strongly that the passion you show to the audience is contagious and can light a spark in members of clubs prompting them to become Rotarians. You should expose your heart so the audience understands that you are committed to the topic not just a presenter.

I am only able to speak in front of an audience because of my Rotary Club. We have to stand up to make presentations as Rotarians and the experience is important to our personal development. Rotary Clubs can be very instrumental in our personal growth as individuals with ethics, with speaking ability and with leadership. I will always be thankful for what my Rotary Club did for me as an individual.

■ **Arthur (Art ) McCullough, Past President,  
Escondido Sunrise Rotary Club, District 5340,  
California USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

Of all of the Rotary speakers Cliff Dochterman is the best and most motivating.

**2. What made them outstanding speakers?**

He knows his subject and had the ability to make people do something with the information, like taking an action and getting their Paul Harris Fellowship. It happened to me in 1983.

**3. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

They did not know their subject; they came across as being better than the audience, or looked down on them.

**4. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Being able to learn how to believe a cause and projecting this to an audience.

**5. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Learning how to concentrate their message and subject.

■ **Carl P Cardey, Rotary Club of Hemet, California, USA:**

- 1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Cliff Dochterman. The skills I listed in 4. below.

- 2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Talking too fast, not loud enough, didn't know their topic well enough,

- 3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

One session on presentation skills at PETS, President's Advance, etc.

- 4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Speak slowly, with pauses at the proper time for emphasis; enthusiasm; add a little humor; Look at the audience on a regular basis to attempt 'bonding'; and know the subject.

■ **Ken Collins, Past Rotary International Director:**

Two of the best speakers I have heard are Cliff Dochterman and Clem Renouf. Both spoke from the heart with powerful messages.

The worst I encountered was a Rotarian addressing a District Conference about his experience overseas as a Rotary Volunteer. He had obviously done no preparation because, having been given 20 minutes for his address, when he was asked to leave the stage after 40 minutes he had not even left Australia.

Rotarians can develop their skills at the club level through telling their own story and being involved in the running of the

club meetings. From there they can become involved in district committees, making reports etc. and later district conference.

To my mind, presentation skills include doing adequate preparation, introducing a little humour, not repeating themselves or waffling. I am told the best speech has a good beginning and a good ending very close together.

■ **SangkooYun, District Governor 2004-05, District 3650, Seoul, Korea:**

**1. Some attributes of the best speakers are:**

Eloquence, Breadth of Knowledge, Humor, Witty, Depth of Wisdom, Moving my Heart, Stirring my Soul, Impeccable Analogy, Precise Delivery.

**2. Some of the worst speakers demonstrate:**

Unpreparedness, Pointless, Dull, Shallow basis of Knowledge, No Emotional Attachment.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Having opportunities to speak in front of a friendly audience.

■ **Dale W. Flinn, Ithaca Rotary Club, New York, USA:**

One of the best speakers I ever heard was at the District 2450 Conference in Cairo, Egypt in 2000. The District Rotaract Chair Ruwaf was one of the presenters and he gave a great presentation. Although he used a PowerPoint presentation with his talk, he never once looked at the screen which was situated behind him on the stage. His PowerPoint presentation complemented his talk perfectly by adding useful notes and additional information to his talk and he did not simply read everything that he put up on the screen. Some of the worst speakers I have seen using PowerPoint put up a bunch of slides and simply read them to the audience, adding nothing to their presentation.



For Rotarians, I believe it is important to know your subject, know what you want to say, know how to say it succinctly, and know how to use technology to enhance your presentation, not just repeat what you are already saying. Finally, I believe Rotary is a great opportunity for members to use and improve their public speaking skills. Whether they are reporting on a committee meeting or event, the guest speaker, or serving as club President, the more opportunities and practice they get speaking in front of others, the better their skills will become. It is also helpful for building confidence as members can get experience in front of their friends and fellow Rotarians. I hope this will be helpful to you!

■ **Thomas J. Setter:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

- Ronald Reagan – Good presentation-clear and concise.
- Lou Holtz – Starts and ENDS on time, factual, honest, humour, motivator.
- Richard King PRIP: inspirational, good presentation, inspiring.
- Cliff Dockerman PRIP: factual, concise, nice joyful speaker, positive.
- Billy Graham: good clear message, uplifting, hopeful.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

- People who go on and onnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn.
- Speakers who don't have facts correct. People lying.
- Derogatory or condescending remarks.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

You see and hear GOOD speakers so you can learn from them. Also our committee structure teaches you how to get your IDEAS across.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

- Start on time end on time.
- Know your subject; be short and concise.
- Enunciate your pronunciation!!
- Use Humor.
- SMILE.

■ **Gabriel G. Minder, Rotary Club of Ferney-Voltaire, France:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

Presidents Kennedy, Obama and Sarkozy are among those who sounded the most **convincing** to me, especially when I could fundamentally **not** agree to some of their arguments.

**What made them outstanding speakers are the following qualities:**

- **statements:** short and clear with pin-pointed examples
- **tempo:** varying, i.e. rather slow, with lively accelerations and almost lengthy pauses to stress important statements
- **face:** varying from smile to expressions carrying at the right time true feelings such as anger, compassion and humility
- **wording:** repetitions to coin phrases that will travel far into millions of minds (“yes we can”)
- **body language:** turning slowly and irregularly within some 120 degrees, to embrace a vast audience both physical and TV-virtual.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

- **statements:** lengthy and supported by unreadable, unending slides. No examples.

- **tempo**: always equally fast
- **face**: intelligent and friendly but expressing only one feeling : “this you’ll never understand because it’s so intricate, it can’t even be explained to you”!
- **wording**: so complicated that the only lasting impression conveyed was “security is too complicated to be understood by anyone”
- **body language**: shifting fast from a straight forward look to turning his back to the audience and reading aloud the big screen no one could read

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

- Clubs meetings should also serve for members being repeatedly asked to express their views remembering above points.
- At say one meeting per month, a “speakers’ coach” will comment himself, and sometimes ask the audience to comment, the presentation skills just displayed by members.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Arguably, the first three skills are the most important, in this order:

- **statements**: short and clear with pin-pointed examples
- **tempo**: varying, i.e. rather slow, with lively accelerations and almost lengthy pauses to stress important statements
- **face**: varying from smile to expressions carrying at the right time true feelings such as anger, compassion and humility.

■ **J. Fred Heitman, Past President, Rotary Club of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

Jim Lacy and, of course, Frank Devlyn.

**What made them outstanding speakers?**

What impresses me is when a speaker can talk with confidence, WITHOUT NOTES, and speak with passion about their topic. If I am anywhere around where these two gentlemen are speaking I want to listen. They move and inspire me.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

The speakers that read their talk; the speakers that look at the screen and talk, the speakers who do not know how to use a mike (keep it in front of your mouth!); speakers that run way over their time limits and disregard their audience; speakers who do not use their technology properly; speakers that put too much information on their slides and don't allow the audience time to gather all the information AS WELL AS the verbal information that is presented and/or speakers who mumble or speak so softly that they can not be understood.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary gives you frequent practice at speaking to a group. When you speak, even in a short announcement, to your Rotary club you can relax because you are among friends. If you will take the opportunity to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance, say a prayer, announce visitors, or make committee announcements to your club then you get a short bit of public speaking practice that allows you to become more confident. Then you can venture out to making announcements at other clubs. Finally you can handle, comfortably, presenting whole programs or chairing club events. The confidence that you get from this will carry over to your professional life too.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Keep it simple, just stand up and make a short announcement without stammering or stuttering. Use Power Point presentations that are timely and useful. Know how to use a mike. Know your time limits.

■ **Mike Fischnaller, Governor 2008-2009, Rotary District 5110:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Frank Devlyn, John Capps, Cliff Dochterman, Rick King, among many more are some of the greatest speakers I've ever heard. Their message is well defined and clearly delivered with a specific purpose each time they speak. They are both motivational and informative.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Poor speakers ramble, aren't organized, aren't prepared, and lose their audience. Their message is lost in its poor delivery.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary offers many opportunities to speak and to get involved with club and district committees. You also have the opportunity to receive coaching from excellent leaders in your local community and at training events.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Key points that help them through the process of defining and structuring their message. Also, the knowledge that everyone needs to practice key messages, especially keynote presentations, to ensure that the opportunity to deliver the message and to facilitate any take away is done effectively.

■ **Stanley Field, Rotary Club of Laurie Sunrise Beach (Missouri), USA:**

1. **Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Those who tied their address to Rotary, kept it short and meaningful, and did NOT use a power point, and, possibly THEN became Rotarians.

2. **Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Those who were self serving, did not provide time for questions, and had poor eye contact with audience.

3. **How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

By enrolling them in a Dale Carnegie course, or a Frank Devlyn lecture.

4. **What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Answer the questions who, what where when and why. And adhere to the 4 Rotary points: Is it Fair, etc.

■ **Walter Zuk, Rotary Club of Calgary Heritage Park, Canada:**

1. **Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Outstanding speakers:

- have a topic and keep on it
- keeping their presentation clear and as short as feasible, while mixing in humour
- know time constraints and keeps within them
- watch their audience, make eye contact and keep them involved

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Poor speakers:

- just get up and talk or read their speech
- may have a PowerPoint presentation and read from the screen—only pictures, graphs and the odd phrase that relates to the immediate topic of discussion should be on the screen

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

- practice—speak to the club, especially weekly as president which will teach you to relax
- prepare—practice in advance
- watch your audience.
- ask a friend for feedback.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

- show you are interested, get involved and make it fun—body language and voice pitch will show it
- prepare with point-form notes so you can present without reading

**■ Raleigh Chinn, Past Rotarian, Past President Rotary Club of Osoyoos, BC, Canada:**

One of the best public speakers was a District Governor (5110—Oregon) that brought local people, info and current info into his speeches to make it relative and more personal.

Most speakers without Toastmasters experience probably need help. Actually, one of the major Toastmasters reps spoke at a PETS in Seattle; either 2000 or 2003.

■ **Eamonn O. Raghallaigh, Secretary, Rotary Club of Dublin Viking, Ireland:**

“In general terms a good speaker is one who knows his (or her) subject, can hold an audience, can speak with authority on the subject and comes prepared to do so with a sufficiently deep knowledge of the subject to facilitate a question and answer session following the presentation. A good speaker also needs to have “a presence” which enables him (or her) to command attention.

Measured against this background, Frank is, to my mind probably one of the best speakers I have ever met in person. In terms of speakers I have heard (but never met) I would include, John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Edward M. Kennedy and President Barack Obama.

Conversely, bad speakers tend to be individuals who are not totally familiar with the subject, are not fully prepared for the presentation and spend a good deal of time rummaging through notes to identify salient points. Their grasp of the topic is so slight that they often have to resort to repeating the same point in different ways or, on the advice of spin doctors “when questioned keep repeating the above.”

It is a pleasure to come across a good speaker who can put an audience at its ease safe in the knowledge that none of the listeners will feel uncomfortable when the speaker finds himself somewhat “out of his depth” in dealing with the topic.

I believe Presentation skills and Public Speaking skills should be an integral part of Rotary Training.

Personally, my Rotary membership has worked wonders for my skills in these areas. I became Treasurer of my Club shortly after I joined and in that capacity was required to make regular presentations to Club members on matters financial. I subsequently became Secretary of the Club and presentation skills and public speaking became more important. Three years ago, I was asked



to take on the role of Annual Programmes Fund officer in the District. This involved moving outside my comfort zone and visiting other clubs in the District to encourage them to try to achieve the EREY target of \$100.00 per member. I have also lectured to second and third level students on business and legal topics.

Without my Rotary membership none of this would have been possible and I am very grateful for the invitation I received many years ago, to become part of the world's greatest service organisation."

■ **Greg Muldoon, Rotary Club of Roseville Chase,  
Past Governor, District 9680, NSW Australia:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

The best speakers I have heard are:

- **Ron Tacchi** (*Professional speaker and motivator*)
- **Max Walker** (*Australian cricketer and Patron of Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children*)
- **Dr. Brendan Nelson** (*former Leader of the Liberal Party and former President of the Australian Medical Association*)
- **Bhichai Rattakul** (*past President of Rotary International*)

The best speakers I have ever heard are those that show their passion. Obviously, it is desirable to have a well-structured presentation and knowledge of the topic, but displaying your passion is what sells the message to the audience.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Speakers that lack emotion are the worst speakers. Knowing your topic does not guarantee a good presentation. Unfortunately, quite a few academics are among the worst speakers I have experienced. They know their subject well, but they can't seem to make it interesting.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

I believe being a Rotarian can improve a person's presentation skills by getting them used to speaking in front of a group of people. Many people are not accustomed to speaking in public, so the more they do it, the more comfortable they get.

A couple of years ago, we had a new member join my Club. We have a tradition of getting new members to speak at a Club meeting to tell us a little about themselves. This lady was extremely worried at the prospect of speaking at our meeting and even admitted she had a very sleepless night prior to the night she was scheduled to speak. She did manage to get through it, but what was truly amazing was to watch her confidence grow over the next few years. After a while, she had no hesitation jumping to her feet and speaking to our members.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Preparation is the key to formulating a good presentation. You need to thoroughly prepare, then rehearse and time your presentation to make sure it fits the allotted time. The more times you run through your presentation, the more comfortable you get with it and the more it flows. Proper use of a microphone is also important. Many people do not know how to use a microphone correctly.

The speaker also needs to engage the audience. In smaller groups, making eye contact with audience members is important.

**■ Valerie L. Scanlan, Past Governor, District 5500, Tucson, Arizona, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Frank Devlyn is one of my favorite speakers, because of his enthusiasm and his ability to deliver a speech in 2 languages without ever stopping to translate.

Another is Cliff Dochterman because of his use of humor. Listeners are paying close attention in anticipation of his next funny story.

I have enjoyed Rotary International President Ray Klinginsmith because of his sincerity and relaxed style. Revealing his new theme was great because of giving the background of how he made the selection.

Jeffrey Cadorette is one of the wildest Rotary speakers I have heard. He has a lot of energy and delivers a speech without it being obvious that he uses a script.

Ann Lee Hussey kept me completely enthralled with her NID experiences and especially her personal story of polio.

The best advice I ever received was from Director John Blount when he told me to tell a story. It is easiest to tell a story that illustrates a point.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Poor speakers are those that read directly from a script without making eye contact in a monotone voice. I do not like to be shouted at or preached to. And, of course, those that are too nervous or have distracting mannerisms are difficult to listen to.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Since public speaking is most people's number one fear, I think any experience offered by Rotary is a step toward over-

coming that fear. In my own Rotary club I have seen those members that went from timid to club president. They worked up to that with baby steps: a vocational talk, a foundation minute, greeter, committee chair giving a committee report and even weekly happy bucks. The steps get bigger when they go on to Assistant Governor or District committees. Even at district assemblies, the one chosen to report on the results of a breakout group is given a chance to practice public speaking to a different audience.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

With the advent of PowerPoint, a presenter is helped to stay on point when slides are used effectively. The practice of different presentation styles can then be applied in the workplace. Using Rotary as a place to practice gives a person confidence to use those skills in the workplace.

■ **George Royle Wright, Rotary Club of Laredo, Texas, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Douglas MacArthur, President John F. Kennedy, President Ronald Reagan, Past RI President Frank J. Devlyn to name a few. They all conveyed a sincere clear message.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

A priest who had a high shrill voice that seemed to whip up and down in the opposite direction to the inflection that one would expect based on the content of the message he was trying to deliver.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Public speaking is a challenge for many, including myself. To overcome this fear, one must have an audience that is friendly to start with and then put together material on a subject that they are well versed in or that they have studied. This gives opportunity that would otherwise not be available to many. It will give confidence, practice, and courteous feedback.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Skill in the use of the microphone and sound system. Many think that their voice is going to carry, but in truth it does not. This is especially true with a diverse group which has older persons who use hearing aids to assist them. The use of presentation materials should be worked on to enhance any presentation. Sit where the audience will be and see what you can see and what you cannot see. Learn how to present material without obstructing the view and if possible use someone to assist with the presentation. If you are not going to use props, make sure that the information to be delivered can be understood without a prop. A good rehearsal generally makes a wonderful presentation. A good presentation is one in which both the speaker and the audience feel good about the time spent.

**■ D. Brent Williams, Past Governor, District 6970:**

**1. Who are some of best speakers ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

- PRIP Bill Boyd
- PRIP Bhichai Rattakul
- Former US Senator Bob Graham
- PBS Newshour Commentator Judy Woodruff

All of the speakers listed above have the capacity to make their audience feel connected with them and involved, whether they are speaking to small groups or to an arena filled with thousands of people. I have heard all of these speakers in person several times, each of them speaking to groups of varying sizes. They all are able to connect with their audience because they speak from their hearts, they exude honesty and sincerity, they know their subject matter very well, they are comfortable speaking without scripts or notes, and they all have the ability to make everyone in the audience feel included and involved.

2. **The worst speakers** to me are the ones who can only read from prepared text, and do not seem sincere. The very worst are the ones who use PowerPoint for their presentation, and then read the text on the slides to their audience.
3. **Rotary membership** can expose any person to MANY speakers and presentations, and the Rotarian can develop his or her speaking and delivery styles by incorporating elements of the most effective speakers. Also, a Rotarian who becomes involved in his or her club will have an opportunity to develop leadership skills through participation in committees and club activities, and will undoubtedly have many opportunities to make presentations.
4. **What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Know your subject – Speak from the heart with passion – Make eye contact with entire audience, even if it is a very large audience – Exude energy and excitement – Be honest – Be yourself

■ **David C. Williams Rotary Club of Mission Viejo, California, USA; Past Governor, District 5280:**

As requested, I submit the following:

Best Speakers: Cliff Dochterman, Skip Kreidler, Rick King, et al  
Reasons: Humor, Organization, Delivery with Enthusiasm  
(Frank's Trademark)

**Worst Speakers:** Disorganized, Humorless, Delivery in Monotone (Passionless)

Membership in Rotary definitely improves communication skills by providing opportunities to practice public speaking and to hear a variety of speakers each week in different settings.

Public speaking must be practiced. The best “off the cuff” talk is well planned in advance. The best “extemporaneous” speech is well rehearsed. Humor must be relevant to the message, and its delivery should be practiced.

■ **Walter McGhee, Rotary Club of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

The best speakers tell a story and speak from the heart and the head. Some have pictures or video to illustrate the topic but that is not always necessary or needed. The presenter is the focus of the presentation and if that speaker is dedicated to the subject, the presentation is a winner. And don't judge the presenter by the cover...the best speaker I have ever heard was a dowdy grandmotherly type who never in a million years would you have know that she was a terrific speaker. The first thing she did was to loudly tell us who she was: She was a grandmother and stated her age 80-something and that she wanted to share some of her experiences with us. There were no notes, no pieces of paper, just a grandmother who sat in a solo chair and she entranced all of us from that point on.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

You know from the start that as they are going to be less than hoped for when the wad of papers hit the podium. That is usu-

ally followed by a fumbling with the papers. Next you learn that the presenter struggles to read (and misread) from those prepared remarks. Thank God for a PowerPoint or video insert that at least gets the topic on the large screen so the poor reader is not the focus for the moment. After a half hour, the audience has thinned out and those left are grateful that there is an ending.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

I don't think that is the job of Rotarians. Just make sure that you have heard the person give a successful presentation prior to booking them for your Rotary meeting.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Know your subject well enough to get up and tell it as a story. Link the facts with personal and human events which you have been part of...believe in what you are presenting and show great enthusiasm about the subject. Use the "pregnant pause" to emphasize important elements. A 5 count pause provides time for that important point to really sink in. Talk to the audience by picking several faces spread throughout to whom you direct your comments.

**■ Eudes de Souza Leão Pinto, Rotary Club of Recife – Pernambuco, Brasil:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

The best speakers I have ever heard was a Catholic Church Archbishop, Dom Antonio de Almeida Mocais, an outstanding speaker because he use the most clear and nice words, without repetition, expressing his thoughts in bright terms.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**



A Federal Deputy of the Northern State of Brazil, which speech was very poor, in all sense of ideas.

**3. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

The presentation skills that most be helpful to Rotarians, has the obligation to become in accordance with reality, rational perspective of actions, integration work and ethic procedure.

■ **Judi Beard Strubing, Rotary Club of Eugene Airport, Oregon, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

PRID Cliff Dochterman – always humorous, but with “young” ideas for Rotary — gets and keeps our attention!

PRID Bhichai Rattakul – no fluff, pulls no punches, keeps us accountable

PRID Rick King – a must for new Rotary leaders — delivers with emotion and challenge to live up to our Rotarian potential

Dr. Jim Womack, past president of Northwest Christian College (now University) — speaks from experience and the heart.

Dr. Martin Luther King, President Barack Obama, President Bill Clinton — each, in his own way, has motivated us with emotion and a call to action.

Each of these people speak from the heart, make eye contact, use good voice inflection, stay on task, transition smoothly from one point to the next, end with a challenge or call to action.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Those who were disjointed, run-on, have poor time management, use “uh” “er” “you know,” issue no call to action, read speech in monotone, maintain no eye contact. Also those who don’t project their voice, making audience strain to be heard; use “jargon” that may be unknown to the audience; tell inappropriate jokes or makes sexist or racist comments; are too technical.....too many stats, down to the penny, (no one remembers that), and those who rely too heavily on power-point with lots of detail and then reads the screen!

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary provides opportunities to speak and present before a group of peers who usually won’t be judgmental.

Zone 25-26 GETS has speech/presentation training as part of the DGE training — led by Dale Carnegie instructors — very effective!

Need more opportunity for training in presentation skills at District level — could be a session offered at District Assembly or as a multi-week course.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Learning to put together and present effective PowerPoint presentations.

Learning some basic speaking skills, including how to prepare a 3 point speech and take the audience to conclusion, how to stay on topic and use time wisely.

Facilitation training (like we received at International Assembly Trainer training.)

■ **Bob Scott, Chair, International PolioPlus Eradication Committee; Past Chair, The Rotary Foundation Trustees:**

“The best advice for a speech, especially to Rotarians is:

- Stand up
- Speak up for 15 minutes on a subject you know
- Shut up

The best advice for a lecture is:

- Stand up
- Speak up for 30 minutes on a subject you know with appropriate uncomplicated slides or overheads
- Shut up”

■ **Lee Mothershead, Rotary Club of San Marino, California, USA; Governor 1998-99 District 5300:**

1. Best speakers – [Cliff] Dochterman, [Frank] Devlyn, [Rick] King. King’s more a performance than a speech. Dochterman uses humor very well. Frank’s enthusiasm contagious. All enunciate well and move logically from one part to another.
2. Worst. Read all PowerPoint slides – entire speech on PowerPoint slides. Spoke very softly and in a monotone.
3. Club craft talks are a starting place for public speaking. Our district offers a seminar on public speaking once a year.

■ **Ronald Lyster, Rotary Club of Westwood Village, California, USA:**

1. **Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Craft talkers from our own club are usually very interesting because of the relationship that they have with our club and each of us. Personalities with name recognition (politicians, entertain-

ers, artists, etc.) are usually good because they typically have public speaking skills; these people also tend to draw potential new members to the club. Educators of all sorts—especially those with college-level teaching skills—are good candidates.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

People who read from a script or play a video presentation. Some District Governors (not joking). People who are there to sell you something.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Opportunities abound for members to address the club and those whom we serve. Some clubs / districts will have a “perl” program, but that’s probably unnecessary, so long as a person desires to obtain training. Toastmasters is another organization many have joined to gain those skills.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Being able to appear relaxed when addressing an audience. Learning to speak from notes and not read from a prepared statement.

**■ Ken Ruiz, Rotary Club of Weston, Florida, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Skip Ross – a great motivational speaker, wrote a Book/CD, the Dynamic Living Series. He speaks from the heart, he is a humble man and a great speaker and has changed lives, mine included, around the globe. He speaks of his weakness so people can better relate to him.

Louie Carrillo, famously known as saying “a man with a dream cannot be denied.” He tells it like it is, no bull!

John C Maxwell and Jim Dornan, speak for themselves. Successful in getting their messages in a simple and honest manner.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Speakers that are not prepared! Bragging about themselves. Doing a PowerPoint presentation and having technical problems and not knowing their information.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Great question! I joined Rotary at 23 yrs old. (San Antonio, Texas 1983) I remember being so nervous when I was introducing the guests but after doing it several times it became comfortable. Rotary propelled me to be a motivational speaker. I have a passion to speak, thanks to Rotary! A burning desire to help others, a desire to motivate other Rotarians to serve. I was given the privilege, the President's gavel in July 2001 at my club, and I learned to be a leader because I learned the true meaning of a being Rotarian early. I truly believe that Rotary prepared me with the necessary presentation skills to inspire others. Attending District Assemblies, Conferences did help and we must get new Rotarians at these workshops early in their Rotary journey, then they will inherit something powerful.... the true meaning of being a Rotarian and once they do, they can speak from the heart at the podium with ease.

New Members need a Rotarian to mentor them, I have been blessed to have several in my 23+ yrs in Rotary, like Norm Paul from San Antonio, Texas; Frank Devlyn, and my good friend PDG Thomas Burnaw... who helped me focus on the small details of having a great and effective club.

*I believe Rotary Membership can be a transformational program for many who enter Rotary. You see, I truly believe Rotary is a transformation program, with an opportunity attached to it, and that opportunity is “to share the magic of Rotary to others”*

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Knowledge. Knowledge of our Rotary history and our future is important to help Rotarians present better. Know your audience of course, and always remember it comes from the heart and not from a book or notes. Although I always have my notes, I learned this from my Father in Law, and a Rotarian, PDG Thomas Burnaw, always be prepared, have your agenda always update it and it will propel a great speech.

**■ Alan Hurst, Rotary District 7980 , Connecticut, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

Some, but not all of our Past RI Presidents (Cliff, Frank, Luis). Many of our Ambassadorial scholars.

**2. What made them outstanding speakers?**

Passion about their subject

**3. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

A lack of passion. Reading not speaking. The subject can make it difficult. Poor preparation. Not engaging the audience

**4. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Providing opportunities to speak to audience. Providing opportunities to find your passion. Access to so many role models of all different ages and backgrounds.

**5. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Opportunities to speak. Use and misuse of technology (PowerPoint, flip charts, props). Observation of others.

**■ Dr. Prithvi Raval, Past Governor, District 3190, Bangalore, India:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

They are in two groups: I Rotarians / Rotary leaders. II Non Rotarians

In the Former Group

- Those leaders at the International Assemblies in the plenary sessions are usually very good. Their content and message went straight to the heart.
- Best speakers are ones who kept time, and did not repeat the same point again and again.
- They did not say ‘when I was the president’ and ‘I did this in my year.’
- Good speakers were to the point, with a sense of humor and vivid relevant examples
- They were motivating, inspiring and at the end of the talk, made you feel ‘yes, I must do something about it’
- Created Awareness to Take Action

In the latter—Non Rotarian Groups: Some highlights

- Few are informed well about Rotary; however they all applauded Rotary for the good work.
- They not only spoke but made contributions to our cause
- They presented information to Rotarians beyond, the usual
- They had themselves set an example in their respective fields
- They compared Rotary to other Organizations and how it fared better

- They applauded the International part of Rotary
- They had heard about Rotary and its efforts towards Polio
- They threw bigger and well meaning projects and ideas needed in the community and said that it was possible ‘only by Rotarians’
- Given sufficient time they traveled long distances to be a part of Rotary program.
- They interacted with the Rotarians after the meeting

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Opposite of all of the above in Answer to Q #1:

- Bad / unpleasant body language
- Bored facial expression.
- Unpleasantly dressed
- Not keeping up time, not relevant to subject
- Made no audience eye contact
- People who read out from paper, page to page
- People who are too funny with too many jokes ‘Stand up comedian types’
- Those who talked only about their success
- Those who had not set any example in their lives, but just theorized!

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

- Run public speaking skills teaching seminar / class room, hands on sessions. If possible this could be included in the District Training Manual.
- The program should be a ‘must’ for all Presidents.
- It should also be a must for the ‘next person in line’ like the Vice President
- In fact, District training should start ‘One year Before’ they take charge, not just on the eve of July 01



**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

- Communication and Time Management are the most important skills to be perhaps learnt by many
- Use of PowerPoint and speaking to the point

■ **Carlo Monticelli, Past Rotary International Director, Rotary Club Milano, Italy:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

- RIPP1992-93 Clifford L. Dochterman: smiling, positive, intelligent, creative, provocative, in my view the best of the best.
- Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi: pragmatic, open, ironic, amusing, down-to-earth, innovative, pays attention to the audience, building future changes.
- President Barack Obama: smiling, genuine, straight, open to unforeseen events.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

- Speakers with too serious & sad face-body expression, always negative & blaming others (I'm right, you're wrong), only talking of mistakes and of past experiences, of risks, of dangers; reading their speeches without watching around, making long voice-sound-pauses, not using images; talking with monotonous voice; excessively formally dressed; pessimistic, negative, slow, aggressive, shouting, etc.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

- Resistance to change is the worst human virus but it's important to enhance the great opportunity of actively living

Rotary not only to serve but learning and increasing each one's skills. Giving to our fellow Rotarians the video recording their speeches so that they can realize their own mistakes, perhaps focusing to get better. Mentioning our best personal learning experiences.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

- Have a look of point #1: to be smiling, positive, intelligent, creative, provocative, pragmatic, open, without interruption, ironic, amusing, down-to-earth, innovative, paying attention to the audience, dreaming to build future change, straight, open to addressees.
- ... ready to get better.

**■ Don Wasson, Rotary Club of Tulsa, Oklahoma; Past Governor, District 6110, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

My list of “best” speakers ... and I’m not sure whether it was the speaker or the subject that made the talk so memorable. Dr. Sabin at the Kansas City RI Convention “dared” Rotarians to not eradicate polio. Then Past RI Director Mike Pedrick’s talk about delivering the polio vaccine to the Phillipines. Bill Gates Sr. at the RI Los Angeles convention when he admonished Rotarians to “Think Big” for their next global initiative. And I cannot fail to mention PDG L. S. “Skip” Kreidler...(his untimely early death robbed much of the world from hearing his messages about “service”). Finally, Marion Bunch as she shares her passion to conquer AIDS (remember she’s the lady who lost her son to AIDS).

Each of the above speakers brought tears to my eyes because their very being was welded and entwined to the subject they

were talking about. They believed so passionately in what they were saying !!

Their personal “stories” are, in my mind, make them the best speakers I have ever heard.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Each of the worst was baaaaad because the speaker did NOT have a passion for the subject he/she was trying to deliver.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills? What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Just this week during training for Assistant Governors a 5-year Rotarian (just completed club president and now in District Leadership) told me, “Oh, how I wish I had found Rotary or Rotary had found me earlier in my life.”

Presentation skills, in my own case, are honed by the “swoosh” of Nike...”JUST DO IT.” As to the question of “What would be most helpful” my only thought concerns getting members to the podium. If they don’t do it well there is a lot of help at EVERY club. You guys know well enough that you have to “do it” to ever be any good...

■ **Sandy Fleck, Rotary Club of Twentynine Palms, California, USA:**

“Cliff Dochterman—by far the BEST speaker ever! He is adorable—he genuinely cares about people, uses humor with the greatest of ease, is a REAL person as opposed to one of the not so best speakers I have ever heard who is well coiffed, dressed to the nines and is more interested in his image than his message.

Rotary membership gives you a chance to share your trade,

hone your skills in a “safe” environment and offers many impromptu opportunities to speak.

Most helpful skills—remembering the fact that your audience does not know all you know, you must lead them through the entire presentation.

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Tell them what you told them.”

■ **Barbara Crozier, Governor 1010-1011, District 5100, Washington State, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Speakers who have and show passion for their topic—they inspire and motivate all of us!

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Those who ramble in a monotone.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Little by little, I gained confidence in speaking by “bragging” about my sons—at first I’d get terrible butterflies that continued even after I’d finished, but now I can talk in front of most any size group without falling apart—I’ll be DG for my district in July.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

How to do speaker introductions; also how to plan and write a good speech — it seems we sometimes put so much emphasis on delivery but you can’t deliver if you don’t have a good plan

of what you're going to say — I haven't received any training from Rotary in this area.

■ **Peter Robert Nageli, Rotary Club of São Paulo, Brazil; Governor 1988-99 & 2001-02, District 4510:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Cliff Dochterman and Bob Barth. They have had something to say, sometimes with great humor, or then with real seriousness. This differs from those who are only story-tellers, tediously or conceited.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

I had it already discussed in my club, because about 70% of the invited speakers don't even deliver the theme for which they were invited. The sad thing is, that you may invite a great professional to talk about his area, only to find out that he has no skill to deliver a speech.

One of the problems is that generally weak speaker don't know how to use the PowerPoint or any other presentation tools skillfully.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

I don't think that the Rotary membership in itself will help to become a better speaker. But also I don't say, that a good speaker has to be born as a good speaker. The club has to give its members a chance to learn those presentation skills, for example through seminars with professionals (even from outside the club) who know how to teach those skills.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

The best thing would be to be able to talk without reading [a script.] On the other side, the worst thing is, when a speaker tells us, that it is a great pleasure for him to be with us, and that he is very grateful for being invited by such an outstanding group of men and women—and he read those words from a paper, when they should come from his heart.

It would be very helpful for the Rotarians, if they were briefer. If you can't get your idea over in 12 minutes, 40 minutes won't do it either.

Possible tips: Help the listeners to follow you. When they can't read what is on the screen, you have lost them. Control your urge to show that you are fanciful. If you play in your PowerPoint presentation with colors and shapes, the listeners will follow what's happening on the screen and not your words, even if they are wise words.

■ **Barbara Shayeb-Helou, Rotary Club North Greenville, Governor 2005-06, District 6890:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

PRIP B. Rattakul [for his] sincerity & knowledge PRIP

Rick King [for his] great poignant stories told with charm, drama and personality

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Speakers who read too many notes, lose eye contact with audience  
Speakers reintroduce themselves after having being introduced (their name is not the point; what they know is the point).

Too many jokes—jokes are not always important—get on with your subject.

I heard a speaker at a Club meeting take a cell phone call during his time at the podium! He did not apologize; but explained that it was his girlfriend on the phone. That in itself was a put down to the Club. Phones should be turned off during meetings. Take less time (if possible) at the podium not more time. Leave the audience wanting more. I heard a DG once deliver a 45 min. address to a 7:30 a.m. Club. Everyone left to go to work, except the Club President. He was never invited back.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotarians must think concisely and report concisely. The longer you are a Rotarian, chair committees, and have to give reports; the more comfortable you should become giving reports.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Eye contact with the audience is so very important. Be natural. Go ahead: smile, laugh and cry!

Whatever emotion fits the subject is O.K. Show how you feel. As someone who has a degree in Speech Communications and has taught public speaking, I am very critical of speakers. I enjoy speakers who can act naturally, have done their homework, and show that it really is a pleasure to come to your Club.

I knew a DG who was so nervous about speaking that he let his wife give his address. Too bad! He lost credibility.

**■ Larry Scott, District Governor 2002-03, District 5340, California, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Frank is near the top, only to be surpassed by Cliff. Rick King is a close second, but between the two of them it depends on the subject and day of the week. I like Ray Klingensmith. His is a simple down-home direct, before the fireplace, style of delivery which connects with the audience.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Now that list can go on and on. The majority of Directors (past and present) need to be provided some formal training on how to prepare a speech, how to deliver a speech, etc, and most importantly how to read the audience and close the speech, even when they have not delivered all their prepared remarks. I have heard so many that drone on and on, letting us know how great they are—PLEASE STOP!

Speakers who take the first 10 minutes of their speech thanking every person who has ever lived or walked into that district, are speakers I really do not want to hear. Keep the thanks simple, then let me know what you intend to speak about, tell me the story, give a short recap and then end.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary Membership actually lends itself to helping a person become better at presentations skills. I believe we need to emphasize speaking skills starting at least at PETS .Give the Pres-Elect a simple outline; have them actually deliver a 5 minute speech while at PETS In other words make them start to feel comfortable at the podium before they have to go home and lead their club. Membership, meaning those individuals subscribe to “Service Above Self” is a great lead-in on any speech to get the audience interested, excited and wanting to join in the effort.



**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Presentation skills are most helpful. Learning how to effectively use a PowerPoint, but not being dependent on it. Developing skill to read the audience, and how it is necessary to establish eye contact when you first start the speech—again attitude combined with sincerity.

We need to help our future leaders develop this talent; PETS is a good place to start. I hate to think how many well intentioned District Governors have driven rational people from Rotary with their poorly prepared, disjointed speeches at so many district functions. If the President of Rotary International is going to select individuals to represent his office, then I would strongly encourage RI to develop a program where they can review those presentations, in advance, and hopefully at least see a video tape before such a presentation is given.

**■ Yolanda V. (Yoli) Woodbridge, Rotary Club of Coral Gables, Florida, USA:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Although we do not expect our Rotary speakers to be stand-up comedians, it usually turns out that our best speakers have a very good sense of humor. Another factor that helps to make speakers memorable is their topic: our members generally respond very well when the subject of the day is an issue that made that day's morning paper. It also is essential that a speaker know the subject matter thoroughly. Finally, we find that our best speakers do not abuse their welcome, but follow the principle of the three "B's": be there, be brief and be gone!

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Generally, the less successful speakers are those who, first, read their speech without making eye contact with the members. It does not help; either, if they deliver their talk monotonously as if they wanted to hypnotize us! Speakers who use PowerPoint often do not know how to put this technology to good use: they far too often simply read what is on the slide instead of explaining it in depth. Bad speakers often do not know their subject matter and make this painfully obvious. Similarly, they often make asides and get off topic.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Active Rotarians sooner or later will be called upon to speak to the Membership, whether they want to or not! Because practice makes perfect (or at least better!), being a Rotarian definitely contributes to one's ease and skill in public speaking. This is especially true as the audience is definitely a friendly one.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

A Rotarian must be able to present projects clearly and in an interesting manner. Specific presentation skills that help Rotarians with their various club activities are those that make one a good public speaker.

■ **Marco Kappenberger, Rotary E-Club of Latinoamérica, District 4200, Mexico:**

“Frank J. Devlyn is certainly among the best speakers, and, besides others, I also consider Cliff Dochterman!

Their personality, radiance, humble dedication to the object of Rotary contributes to make them excellent speakers.

The worst speakers are doing it badly prepared, without believing in what they say, without looking in the audience's eyes, concerned about their own glory and not really dedicated to the subject they talk about, including the object of Rotary.

Besides the opportunity to practice improving oneself each time by talking in Rotary Clubs, RI certainly does offer increasingly good information, especially also on its website.

Besides what I just mentioned, Rotarians should prepare well, use best possible the continually better presentation tools available.”

■ **Cathy Roth, Governor 2004-05, District 9780,  
Geelong, Vic, Australia:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Cliff Dochterman – his delightful sense of humour coupled with his brilliant comic timing results in exceptionally funny, yet quietly thought-provoking, speeches.

Bicchai Ratakul – his humility pervades his every word and he brings a hush to every audience as they soak up his gentle wisdom.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

One Past Governor, as President's Representative at our District Conference, stormed at the audience for forty minutes before people started to walk out. He took no notice of the red light on the lectern indicating he should finish. There was no inflection in his voice, and he made no eye contact with the audience whatsoever. His efforts were only exceeded by another Past Governor who, with his back to the audience, read his Power-Point word for word, in a total monotone. Riveting!

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Opportunities to present to club and District activities, coupled with a gain in confidence through leadership roles, and the training available through such programs as The Rotary Leadership Institute, ensures Rotarians improve their presentation skills.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Fear tends to make Rotarians either talk too much or too quickly. Skills to deal with fear, to keep focused, to identify audience needs, to read the audience, to structure various types of speech or presentation, to pace the speed and intonation of their voices, to understand “good” stress, and to learn relaxation skills.

**■ Marvin L. Munro, Rotary Club of Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada; Governor 2000-01, District 5060:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

Cliff Dochterman, Rick King, Frank Devlyn, Tony Robbins, Winston Churchill, Earl Nightingale. They were confident, knowledgeable about their topic, humorous, didn’t read the speech, told stories, and had a message to give.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

[Those who] read a PowerPoint on screen, read speech without looking up, have a monotone voice, are disorganized and unprepared.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotary can provide leadership opportunities at the club level and beyond where presentation skills can be developed and refined. To be a good leader, the vision must be communicated to the members (audience). They must become motivated and galvanized to take action.

A good Rotary leader will be confident and able to express his thoughts on a variety of topics.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Organization of thoughts in logical manner; ability to express themselves succinctly; Practice; Take advantage of opportunities to speak; Learn from mistakes and avoid being discouraged; Take a Dale Carnegie course or join Toastmasters to learn some presentation skills and memorization techniques.

■ **Dr. Adeyemi Oladokun, District 9140, Nigeria:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? What made them outstanding speakers?**

- a] Abraham Lincoln – Courageous speaker
- b] Winston Churchill – Inspirational war time leader
- c] Barrack Obama – Charismatic and intelligent
- d] Bill Clinton – Democratic leader with eloquent persuasive and electrifying speeches.
- e] Socrates – a Greek philosopher, Plato's master and an intellectual leader who attracted many followers through speeches.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Many unorganised and wired speakers.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Rotarians can become great speakers through seminar training and participation in RLI training.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

Presentation skills are helpful to Rotarians because they are leaders who need to create a good public image wherever they speak.

■ **Denny Kurir, Rotary Club of Orlando, Florida, USA;  
Governor 2007-08, Rotary District 6980:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

John T Capps  
Frank Devlyn  
Lou Holtz  
Pat Williams

**2. What made them outstanding speakers?**

Passion in what they were speaking about  
Effective use of pauses  
Effective use of body language (gestures)  
Effective use of voice inclination  
Thought and planning as to what they wish to convey

**3. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

monotone  
boring  
no passion about their subject  
unplanned and erratic

**4. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

Active participation in meetings and making presentations before the board of directors and/or the club forces members to

think, prepare and speak with thoughtfulness. Practice makes perfect

■ **Linda Coble, Rotary Club of Honolulu, Hawaii, USA;  
Governor 2000-01, District 5000:**

**1. Who are some of the best speakers you have ever heard?**

Michael Pritchard is a stunning speaker, because he is just that...stunning and unpredictable. His ability to go from thigh-slapping humor to tear-jerking personal experiences to thought provoking insight on everything from anger management and conflict resolution to diversity is remarkable. Stage movement, energy, voice transitions, passion and compassion are valuable components of any presentation.

The element of surprise is rarely so effectively used. A speaker's unique personal experience that emotionally and intellectually connects with a diverse audience is exemplified by PRIPs Rick King and Cliff Dochterman.

**2. Without naming names, describe some of the WORST speakers you have ever heard and what made them such poor speakers?**

Speakers without passion, who have taken a subject and turned it into a dull lecture. Reliance on PowerPoint will drain the energy out of a room, when the technology strips the humanity from a presentation.

**3. How do you think Rotary membership can help a person become better at presentation skills?**

We learn by doing and observing. The presentation skills exhibited by fellow Rotarians and guest speakers who are outstanding communicators may inspire us to sharpen our own methods of relating to each other...either from a podium or at the dining table. Rotary membership offers training opportunities in a familiar and non-threatening setting, where support

replaces competition and personal improvement is congratulated and not coveted.

**4. What presentation skills do you feel would be most helpful to Rotarians?**

The ability to share relevant information in a manner that provokes a meaningful call to action.

The ability to share a personal Rotary experience and inspire others to find their own joy through Service Above Self. The tools with which to share Rotary's mission and their Rotary passion with someone who casually points at their pin and asks, "what is that?"

■ **Bill Cadwallader, Past Director, Rotary International:**

"The following are answers to your questions about the qualities of outstanding Rotary speakers:

**1. Best Rotary speakers**

- a. Cliff Dochterman
- b. Carlos Canseco
- c. Rick King
- d. Bhichai Rattakul
- e. Frank Devlyn
- f. Raja Saboo
- g. Ray Klinginsmith
- h. Bob Scott
- i. Ravindran, K.R.
- j. John Capps

**2. What made them good speakers?**

- a. They enjoyed speaking to Rotarians and their guests.
- b. They are entertaining as well as informative.
- c. They concentrate on approximately three points for the focus of their speech.



- d. They involved the audience, either physically or through comical inclusion in their speech.
- e. The length of their presentation stayed within the limits of the time given to them (Carlos Canseco was a possible exception).
- f. If they discussed any aspect of Rotary service that might be considered controversial to some Rotarians, they did it in a way that did not seem controversial.
- g. They look the audience in the eyes and often do not even refer to notes. Teleprompters are valuable contributions to those who need to read their speeches.
- h. For better or worse, when some of these great speakers finish their presentations, I wonder what they said that was related to promoting the programs of Rotary. We have a tendency to remember the jokes (and take notes on the jokes) but cannot discuss, among ourselves, the importance of the Rotary information.
- i. Rotarians have a tendency to not want to discuss controversial matters. For our organization to progress, it must be realized that the “controversial topics” are often the topics which, if dealt with openly, can allow Rotary to transcend an even higher level of service to humankind.

### **3. Worst speakers**

- a. They ignored the rules for the best speakers noted above.
- b. Many made the jokes and stories the basis of their speeches.
- c. Some read their speeches with little time to look at the audience.
- d. Jokes included within the speech should pass the query, “Will this story offend anyone in the audience?”
- e. They have refused to use the microphone in disregard to those in the audience who have hearing disabilities.
- f. They continually use the words; like, you know, you know what I mean, ahh.

- g. They will use colloquialisms that are understood by only those in the region of the country where they live.
- h. They do not dress appropriately for the occasion or as a person for whom there should be a higher level of respect (one would hope that the speaker is a person who should demand the audience's respect).

**4. How Rotary membership can improve one's public speaking abilities.**

- a. Practice makes perfect; even better, perfect practice makes perfect. Rotary provides its members the opportunity to present ideas to people of a variety of backgrounds on a weekly basis.
- b. Being president of one's Rotary Club is a wonderful way to enhance one's speaking abilities; as well as one's diplomatic skills.
- c. I personally feel that my term as the president of my Cortland Rotary Club was one of the most wonderful experiences in my life. Even though I had many leadership opportunities to serve in high school, college, professional school and in my profession, my Rotary club members made the Rotary club president experience one I truly enjoyed as it allowed me the chance to work with the leaders of the leaders within my community and to develop programs that would be of benefit to not only my community but to my world.

**5. Presentation skills that will be helpful to Rotarians.**

- a. Stand up, speak up and shut up.
- b. Look the audience in the eye, just as if you were speaking to them as individuals.
- c. Choose jokes and stories as if you were speaking to the most kind and caring minister in the club.
- d. Always wear a coat and tie, or whatever formal attire is accepted by the group to whom you are speaking.

- e. Never be late for a presentation.
- f. If one is to use technology in ones presentation, always arrive early enough to be certain that it is going to work.
- g. If one is uncertain with ones technology, be certain to have someone present who does understand the level of sophistication and can help out in a pinch.

I appreciate that you will put together a primer on the basics of speaking for Rotarians, Frank. My grandson, Parry, has been a debater in high school. I have always told him that no matter whether he has won or lost the debate, he has always won because of the opportunity to express himself in a positive manner in controversial situations.

■ **Trish O'Reilly, Rotary Club of Huntly, New Zealand; Governor 2003-04, District 9930:**

“Some of the best speakers I have ever heard are PRIP Frank Devlyn, PDG Ewan MacKenzie, Dr Norman Vincent Peale and Li Cunxin. I first heard Frank talking when I was in Anaheim for District Governor Training in 2003. He was so impressive with his personality, his vast knowledge on Rotary matters and his excellent public speaking skills. I have heard him many times since and he always is so dedicated to his passion and commitment to Rotary.

Many years ago, I was just a new Rotarian and heard Ewan MacKenzie from Waimate, South Island, New Zealand. speak on The Rotary Foundation. He showed a Power Point on the history of man and how the population of the world is expanding so fast. He was a dynamic speaker on TRF and this really impressed on me how important it is to support TRF as the needs of the world are getting greater with the population explosion of growth. He had an excellent voice and manner and has always been so helpful to us with information about TRF. To us he is known as the person to contact

in New Zealand for advice and counseling on these matters which he does so willingly.

In the eighties I was attending business seminars in Auckland. One day we had six speakers and the very last one was different. He was Dr Norman Vincent Peale—the Author of “the Power of Positive Thinking.” He had an extremely loud raspy voice and everyone could certainly hear him. His talk has always been on my mind as the content was so interesting and challenging. He talked on taking on challenges, not being afraid, and always to have high ethical standards. Certainly needed in this world at present.

In 2006 I was privileged to represent RI President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammer at District 9820 Conference in Geelong, Australia. One of their Keynote Speakers was a young man Li Cunxin—who wrote a book called “Mao’s Last Dancer” which is now being released as a movie. Li talked about his life and the terrible hardship in China, of having to leave his family and country to study ballet in the United States. An amazing speaker, an amazing story—he held the floor and ended with all Rotarians giving him a standing ovation. He had the passion, dedication and the pain he had experienced showing through an emotional presentation.

Being a Rotarian exposed me to most of these speakers and I am truly thankful for this experience. I always admire people who can deliver without notes and I find it is usually those who are retelling their life stories. In Rotary one can learn to use a microphone, to get the confidence to be able to stand up in front of an audience, and to express great ideas for projects etc to their club. As their confidence grows so does their Rotary service and so they end up in positions they never thought possible.

Twenty years ago I also had a mentor—Mr. John Oliver from Sydney, Australia whom we met on a world trip in 1990. I talked to him at length about taking on positions on Boards—I had

been asked to serve on the Coal Council of New Zealand Board) and also taking on service work (e.g. Rotary and Justice of the Peace). He assured me that all I needed was “Dedication and Effort.” This certainly inspired me at the time and I am sure that with “Dedication and Effort,” Rotarians will enjoy this new book on Public Speaking.

Sincere thanks to PRIP Frank Devlyn and David Forward for this powerful educational tool.”

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