**TED TALKS—MORE TIPS!**

**1. Start With A Bang! No Weak Beginnings Allowed.**

Don’t start the presentation with a weak beginning. Don’t say things like “thank you for that introduction” or “it’s nice to be here..” Instead, give the audience something powerful that will get their attention immediately. Make sure you wow your audience in the first 30 seconds. When giving a 5-10 minute speech, 30 seconds is a very long time! Introduce your topic in a unique way and make sure to know who your audience is, what will impress and intrigue them. Remember, you have 30 seconds to begin your speech, impress, and also let them know what your speech is about. The first few sentences must be very carefully constructed.

**2. Organize Your Ideas: Your Speech Must Have A Structure.**

Professional speakers know that one of the key ways to keep their audience engaged is to have a clear structure for their speeches. Develop an outline for your speech- even before writing the speech out. You can organize your speech structure in several ways, including chronologically, thematically, or topically. Here are some of [Leo Babuata’s lifehack.org tips](http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-tips-from-lincoln-on-writing-a-kick-ass-speech.html) for writing a kickass speech.

Don’t take this advice for granted. Organizing your ideas into an outline will improve the quality of your speech and help you create a coherent message that comes together neatly. If you don’t this is beforehand, it could result in a very chaotic speech. Speech audiences need structure in order to enjoy a speech. When you’re listening to a speech, you may not recognize the structure, but it affects your experience. Once you’re an experienced speaker yourself, you will begin to notice that every good speech has a clear structure.

**3. Realize That Pauses Are… VERY Powerful.**

The four pillars of vocal variety in the Toastmaster’s guide are Pace, Pitch, Power and Pauses. Pauses are by far the most dramatic of the four, so you need to learn how to use them wisely. Pauses can be varied and used throughout different sections of the speech. Short pauses are necessary between sentences, and you need to deliberately pause, because if you don’t it will sound like your sentences are connected, confusing and too rushed.

Long pauses can be used between the different sections of the speech where you are transitioning from one idea to the next. The longest pauses should be used sparingly, when you want to emphasize the most important points and you want to gather up the audiences’ attention before stating them. In terms of pace, slowing down through key statements will do wonders to emphasize them.

**4. Get To The Point- And Stay On Target.**

State the goal, main idea, or main questions being explored early on, and stay on target with this main topic. Make sure every part of your speech is on target. It may seem repetitive to you, but an audience of a speech does not retain information very well (only impressions and impact of the message). This means you need to repeat your main message in several different ways if you want the audience to take that message with them after the speech is over. Even if your speech has several sections with different information, it should always tie back to the main message and stay on target.

**5. Use Simple Words: Think *Conversational*.**

The best, most inspiring speeches use simple words and have a conversational tone. Forget jargon, and forget complicated, long sentences. Keep your sentences succinct, and your words short. Avoid [crutch words](http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifehack/how-to-cut-crutch-words-when-giving-a-speech.html). This will make your speech more believable, and you as the speaker more likable. Gaining the audience’s trust in this way is key to connecting with them.

“Effective delivery, even to a large audience, is intimate. Your delivery should be conversational.” -**John Kinde, DTM** and **Loren Ekroth, Ph.D**, *Toastmasters Magazine.*

**6. Use Body Language Effectively: Complement Your Words For Maximum Impact.**

Remember to use the correct body language for the desired effect, and don’t pace around aimlessly on the stage. When you’re nervous on stage, you might make gestures without realizing it, and most of these types of gestures and stances take away from the power of your speech. Some of these include pacing back and forth nervously, fidgeting with your hands, crossing your arms and uncrossing them repeatedly, and more.

When people begin to notice these movements, they generally zone out of your speech and begin focusing on the movements. This is because people tend to mirror your attitude during speeches. When they can clearly see your nervousness through your body language, they will also begin to feel restless and nervous themselves. You need to practice controlling your body language, and incorporating useful gestures instead. Useful gestures are expressive, curated movements that clearly coincide with the idea you are delivering in that moment.

**7. Don’t Overwhelm: No More Than 3 Takeaways.**

That’s probably already too many! Try to focus on one clear message with a couple of supporting points. The best speeches teach the audience something new, or allow them to see a topic in a whole new light. Make your message memorable. Speeches are one of the most “inefficient” forms of learning because the listener does not retain a high number of specific facts. However, in terms of impact, a speech can go very far. The impact of your speech will depend on the clarity of the message, repetition of the message, and the unique angle of your message.

**8. Use Vocal Variety- Add Life And Color To Your Speech.**

Your voice is the medium and tool for delivering your speech. It has a major effect on your listeners. You should focus on making your speaking voice lively, enthusiastic, pleasant, natural, and powerful at certain moments. This can all be achieved through practice. You need to add a variety of different volumes, pitches and tones to make your speech engaging and fun to listen to.

What do you think makes for a good storyteller? **It’s the vocal variety- the ability to enunciate words, use power and high volume in some moments, and sometimes even speaking in a whisper.** A speech won’t have such a contrast but this is the basic idea. You need to tell a story with your voice as much as your words.

Don’t over-strain your voice in the days leading up to the speech, such as yelling, going to a Karaoke bar, or cheering loudly at a baseball game. It will most definitely affect the quality of your delivery. On the day of the speech, make sure to rest your voice, and have a glass of water before starting.

**9. Back Up Your Arguments With The Right Evidence.**

Most of your compelling arguments need some kind of evidence to support it. A speech that is well-researched demands credibility. This is not to say that your speech should be heavily fact and statistics oriented, because this would make for a very boring speech. However, emphasizing your top arguments with the right backup can really increase the impact of your speech. You can research your speech topic using books and the internet. Make sure to mention where you got the info to make your speech more persuasive. Sometimes, depending on the topic, you can use a simple chart, graph or quote to provide even more visual context.

**10. Get Comfortable With Your Visual Aids.**

If your speech includes the use of presentation slides, make sure you know them well. You need to be really comfortable with using them, in every aspect. They must be appropriate for your speech and displayed professionally, and be easy to read or see. You should know how to use the technical equipment where you are giving your speech, and you should not turn away from the audience to read the slides. As a matter of fact, the slides should not contain too many words. The most effective speeches use lots of visuals, or simple quotes or points displayed in a really big font size.

**11. Know Your Audience, And Don’t Forget To Inspire Them Deeply.**

If possible, you should find out who your audience members are by researching the event, venue or topic of your speech in this respect. If you know a little bit more about them, your message can be catered to impact them more deeply. If you know what makes your audience tick, and what issues they care deeply about, you have the ability to inject them with inspiration and make them reflect on something important.

Even if you can’t find out the exact type of audience you will speak to, it’s important to remember to think about inspiring your audience while you write your speech. You are not there to merely present facts and leave. In most cases, speeches (oddly similar to certain sermons) aim to make the audience self reflect and take action on something in their lives. This is a beautiful thing if you can manage to accomplish this. Aim high!

**12. Tell A Story. Or Two… And Use Stories About People.**

People love to listen to stories. Stories and anecdotes are much more memorable than statements that are disconnected. A good story can weave together some really good points and usually ends with a clear lesson which is easy to remember. In order to connect with the audience, make sure you use your own stories and tell them in an authentic manner.

Don’t borrow other people’s stories- reflect on your own experiences and find stories that illustrate your most profound thoughts. This will do wonders in making the audience trust you. Here’s my favorite [TED speech which incorporates personal stories](http://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_palmer_the_art_of_asking.html) into the speech seamlessly. It’s Amanda Palmer’s [*The Art of Asking*](http://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_palmer_the_art_of_asking.html). In this speech, she pretty much incorporates everything I’ve laid out in this post very successfully!

**13. Use Humor: Make Your Audience Smile Or Laugh As Soon As Possible.**

One of the easiest ways to get the audience on your side is by making them laugh early on. If you tell them a story that makes them smile or even laugh out loud, you’ve already won over their approval and trust, and their smiles looking in your direction will give you more confidence to power through the rest of the speech.

**Professionals know this, and use this method very strategically!** Next time you’re listening to a good speech, remember this turning point in the speech, and take note of how good it made to feel when the speaker made you laugh.

**14. Practice Your Speech! This Is An Absolute Must.**

Practicing gives you the ability to feel out your speech, work out inconsistencies, and fix your timing. When practicing a speech in front of a mirror or in front of a supportive group of people, it is recommended to use time limits. Make eye contact with specific people in different sections of the audience, and connect directly with them. This takes some practice to get it right and look natural.

Practicing also allows you to hone in on your best gestures, body language, facial expressions, and experiment with variations of pitch and emphasis in your voice. It’s also important because it helps you remember your points better each time. No one wants to see a speaker who is reading. Follow [these tips](http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/powerboost-your-speech-with-one-simple-trick.html) while practicing.

**15. Give Them Goosebumps: End Strong With A Compelling Call To Action.**

It’s always a good idea to end strong, and come full circle with your message. Just as a good essay has a strong introduction and strong conclusion, so does a good speech. The conclusion should repeat the main points from the introduction but in a summarized, concluded format, and introduce a compelling “call to action,” which can be something for the audience to think about or act upon.

Don’t end your speech with a question and answer session. Even if your speech will have a Q&A session, take the stage back after the session and end strong with a summarized conclusion.