

CHEAT SHEET

10 Ways to Stay Fully Focused when Speaking

Here are 10 terrific techniques for achieving maximum presence and influence every time you speak. Each of them is rooted in the theater. These tips are simple enough to grasp and practice immediately. Together, they constitute a recipe for presentation success!

- 1. Ground yourself.** Feel your feet gripping the floor. Imagine your feet have roots that go deep into the earth. The earth gives you energy and stability. You are steadfast and powerful!
- 2. Stand or sit with good posture.** Visually, it's important. Overall, it makes a difference in how strongly you and your ideas are accepted. You will feel like you have more authority if you look like you should.
- 3. Breathe diaphragmatically.** That means slowly, deeply, and calmly. "Belly breathe" by taking fuller breaths, and learn how to control your exhalation so you support the sound to the ends of phrases (where the most important words usually reside).
- 4. Dive into your audience.** Your audience is a pool. Submerge yourself in their energy and humanity. Relish the sheer reality of their presence and yours, together.
- 5. Take your time.** Public speaking can make you speak too rapidly because of adrenaline, the "fight or flight" hormone. Take your time to cherish this opportunity, which is only here now and in a moment will be gone forever.
- 6. Pay attention with all of your senses.** Take in sensually everything that's going on around you. Hear with your eyes, feel the audience's reactions as if it were tactile, taste the ideas in your mouth, etc. Respond with all your being!
- 7. Aim your energy outward.** Your audience matters, not you. Lose yourself in your message and how it is being received. If you are a leader who isn't used to hearing this, I will repeat it: you don't matter. Send the best of you to the people who do matter.
- 8. Make eye contact as you tell the story.** The story is what the audience is here for. Whatever you're talking about, it's a story, a narrative. In that sense you're always involved in storytelling. Tell people about it.
- 9. Trust silence.** Silence is one of the most powerful tools in your public speaking toolbox. It helps you pace your presentation. It gives audiences time to fully grasp what you're saying. It also tells audiences, "I'm confident."
- 10. Move!** If you move while you speak, it will help you think and keep you in the moment. Strong, clean gestures amplify your content and bring it to life. The body is an essential tool of human communication, and ignoring it can turn you into a block of wood. If you're seated, simply use your arms, hands, upper body, and face. But give physical expression to the important things you say. If you don't, we'll miss the person behind the ideas.

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