

A background grid of many small, semi-transparent video frames showing a diverse group of people, mostly of African descent, smiling and looking towards the camera. The frames are arranged in a grid pattern, creating a sense of a large, inclusive community.

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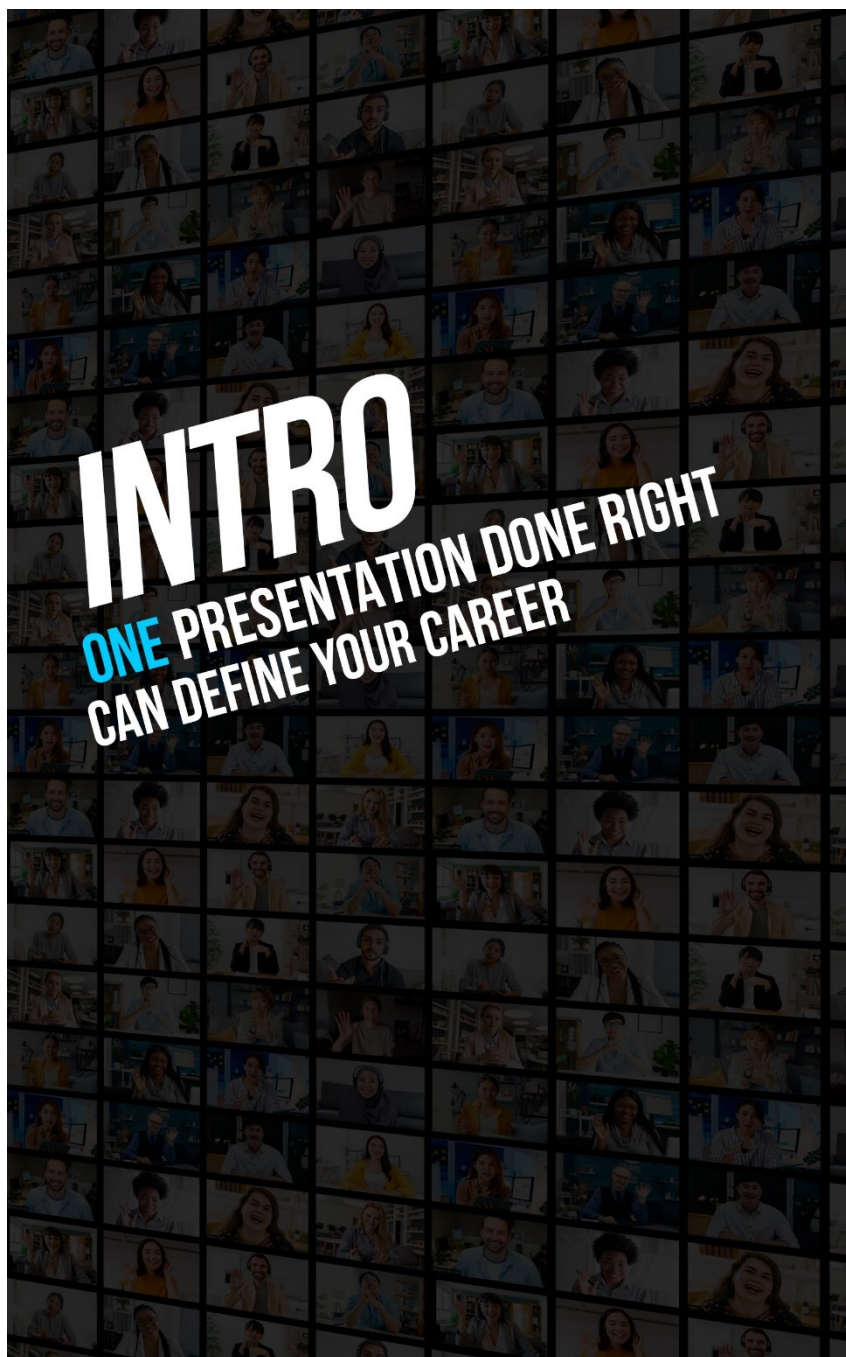
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STEP #10 - POP THE QUESTION



INTRO

ONE PRESENTATION DONE RIGHT
CAN DEFINE YOUR CAREER

I was the underdog... until then.

It was one of the biggest leaps of faith that I could've taken. I was scared out of my mind to do it, but it was one of the best decisions I could've made- when a couple of years ago I took a leap of faith and competed in an innovation business pitch competition that earned me \$10,000 for delivering the best presentation to my company. I was up against eight other teams and each of us was tasked with developing a creative idea and presenting it on stage in front of our ENTIRE company (hundreds of people). We each had **10-minutes** to pitch our best idea. Everyone would then cast an anonymous vote and the winner would win \$10,000! Everyone from our CEO to the board of directors was in the audience. My bosses, my colleagues, my employees... everyone. The competition was fierce. The pressure was on. The stakes were high. And the fear of bombing on stage was enough to make at least 4-teams back out at the last minute. Heck, I was so nervous too that I actually considered backing out on the day of.

Some of the other teams were pretty intimidating, with large numbers, category experts and fully developed inventions to present and demo. I was the one lone-ranger in the competition with nothing but a three page slide deck and a microphone. I was the underdog. Unpopular and unknown by the majority. And somehow I stole the show. How did I do it? It wasn't through fancy visuals or power in numbers. It was through the strategic art of persuasion- 10-simple steps that I am going to unpack so that you can do the same!

After that one presentation, I was no longer the underdog. In 10-minutes I went from just having a job to now having a position. All of a sudden my voice mattered. I now had a seat at the "big kids" table with

the C-suite along with every other leader who's perspective mattered. Creative decisions that would affect the entire company weren't made unless they first sought my input. I now had respect and influence... all from one presentation well crafted, and well delivered.

I began to receive invites to sit in on executive planning meetings. I was asked my opinion on the direction that we as a company should head in, what we should be doing next and whom we should be hiring. People began to see me in a new light and approached me with a newfound respect. One presentation allowed me to now have a seat at the table. And one presentation done correctly (in-person or virtual), can do the same for you, or better!

Here's the truth:

What I believe, is that there is at least ONE life changing opportunity that comes along every single day that has the power to completely up level your life... and in it somewhere is the need for effective, persuasive and powerful verbal communication. If you want to rise in influence quickly and reach your greatest potential value where others recognize you, then you can't avoid it. It will always feel like a risk. Like a leap of faith into the unknown. But it is required if you want to go from being the best kept secret in your field, to the next big thing.

Taking on a public speaking challenge is a critical skill for building confidence, leadership and establishing yourself as a true authority in your role. You will never truly reach your full potential as a professional without it! Even Warren Buffett said that effective public-speaking raises a person's value by 50% instantly. He says that at the age of 21, public speaking is the thing that renewed his confidence and gave him the courage

to advise investors who were older than him and gave him the courage to propose to his wife, Susie, which Buffett says was the most important decision of his life.

Today, as a public speaking coach, many of my clients have acquired both category fame and legitimate fortunes, and are out of this world accomplished. But as they climb the ladder they begin discovering that communications skills are where they are stuck. That's a cold and sobering wakeup call- to be at the top of your game but lack the skills to hold an audience. Unfortunately, when you are at 'the top' this is a skill that is expected of you! But if you don't have it... it's like being a novice all over again. There's nothing scarier than getting a request to do press or a keynote and having built no 'muscle' in this area, let alone know what to say, how to say it or where to start. I'm talking about public speaking opportunities, both in-person and virtual, that you cannot afford to mess up on and you only get one shot!

Most all of my clients come to me in this condition and need help, fast! They may even be the life of the party and confident in small circles. But when they get on stage - in front of a microphone or on camera, they freeze up— or fall apart.

Ever been there?

So what comes up is... *Jarrold, I know I need to get better. Can you please help?!* The answer is YES. You can go from being the best kept secret to the next big thing! The only question left is- why not YOU?



Bottom line: People care about ONE thing... THEMSELVES

Touch their hearts first... and you'll earn their vote.

Jarrod, It's not about what YOU want to say... It's about what THEY need to hear. This was the thought that replayed over and over in my mind the evening I walked into the auditorium, just hours before I would deliver my presentation. Bottom line, there is one sure fire filter that everyone listens through. And it's called: *What's in it for me?* That is what they are listening for. So get to THAT, and do it quickly! Otherwise they will tune you out. It does not matter how great your idea or how life changing your advice is. If your message is not timely or doesn't contain a tailored solution that solves your listeners problems, directly helps them with their current pain points, goals and desires, then your message does not matter!

What is their unspoken ambition?

So stop and consider- What do THEY currently care about? What keeps them up at night? Why did they choose to attend this event? Why did they invest? What do they WANT? Now.... what do they REALLY want? Maybe it's to be heard... Have a voice... Maybe their unspoken desire is recognition.

That's when I discovered the real solution to winning the majority audience vote. Even though I had already come up with my idea to present to the company, I realized that day in and day out, there were so many of my colleagues who knew they were immensely talented, but felt overlooked, undervalued, and because of this, were secretly job hunting. They secretly had a deep desire for recognition and meaning. To know that they were a part of a family that really saw them and

valued them for who they were, rather than just punching a clock.

If you understand their REAL ambition and communicate it back, you can win them over...

So as I opened my presentation I began by pointing that out in saying: ‘Every one of you in this room has something incredibly valuable to contribute. Steve.. No one can create a custom backend buildout that converts better than YOU can!... Kelsey, no one has better insights to what a client really desires than YOU do! And without all your unique talents onboard, this million-dollar initiative won’t work’. I pointed out at least 10-other random individuals from all over the room, people that often go unrecognized. I gave them each a legitimate compliment. I shared to the room how much they mattered just for being uniquely themselves. I touched their hearts... and by doing so, I earned their vote.

There’s the idea that we presenters must **purchase listening** in order to be heard. Another way to put it—people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. To achieve this, they need you to build a bridge between your presentation and their needs. **Make it about them first.** Audiences are selfish in this way. They need to know that you care enough about them to also form your presentation around them and their needs. Do this in the beginning of your communication.

Sometimes, people just want to know that they have something valuable to contribute, and that they got to play a part. Recognition. Even if their ideas aren’t implemented. Some of my best messages have been

those where my listeners get a brief moment to just share their thoughts and feelings.

Here's why this works:

People are really very simple. **Everyone has three basic needs- To know that they are SEEN. To know that they are heard. And to know that they matter!** That's it. Those three things! Think of a time you were sitting down, listening to someone going on and on about material that just did not relate or speak to you. They want to know that they have something valuable to contribute within the space they reside.

Even during a message Q&A, I will acknowledge their question by saying: *"Thank you Mike for raising that point! I do have some thoughts, but what matters more to me right now is your point of view... Have any of you dealt with that same challenge?.. Yeah? What was that like for you exactly? Did you run up against the same roadblock as Mike? Or was it different for you? Share with me...Tell me more about that..."*

By doing this, you relieve yourself from being in the hot seat. Ultimately, you give your listeners the thing they've really desired the entire time... The space to have a voice in the conversation. Usually they will arrive at their own conclusion... Meaning YOU won't bear the burden of being responsible for having all of the answers! In the end, they will only remember how amazing the experience was.

My magical strategy?

[Back to my company-wide presentation]

I called out the people in the room... I paid them respect and kudos... I called out talents they had, that had gone unnoticed by the larger institution. Again, people have the need to know that they are seen. That

they are heard. and that they matter. They didn't really want to vote for the idea that helped the company. They wanted to vote for the idea that gave THEM recognition. Which is why they voted for me.

Whether this is a keynote, job interview, presenting a project recap or a direct report meeting....DO NOT proceed until you have absolute clarity in THIS area— Absolute certainty that you know what they want. Without it, your message is pointless (or as people say- *"This meeting was a waste of my time"*).



Be MORE like... YOURSELF

Everyone has their *thing...* their *quirk...* their own unique personality... or the thing that they do best or naturally, that causes people to engage with them. My public speaking mentor, Josh, for example, is a class clown at heart. He's a natural comedian and great at making people laugh. Therefore, much of his presentations will involve humor (note: if you can make em' laugh, you can win the deal and get people on your side. When we laugh, we're open to persuasion). Another public speaking colleague of mine, Brooks, is absolutely great at acting, impersonations and elocution dynamics. So when he gets on stage or on camera, he will deliver his message and stories in 5-different character voices. It's wildly entertaining!

My public speaking friend, Kelly, is best at facilitating stimulating roundtable discussions. So her talks will be 75% audience participation and Q&A. My friend Lauren is best at being a "mom". She has a warm and soothing, understanding nature about herself. So instead of trying to be the speaker with a big booming voice, she'll instead, use her warm motherly voice when she's on the mic... And it works to her advantage like a charm! Listeners are hypnotized by her when she talks!

My superpower is my fusion of kindness, encouragement and my upbeat energy! A few times per year, I emcee and facilitate for large conferences (both in-person and virtually for audiences in the thousands). I am so upbeat and energetic that people call me '*The Energizer Bunny*' or '*The Audience Energizer*', because making audiences FEEL energized comes easy to me. I am also a big brother at heart, so I tend to radiate a lot of compassion in my tone of voice. I often talk to audiences like I am talking to a sibling of

mine that I love, look out for and protect. And it works for me.

Bring your most authentic self into your communications and do what comes most naturally for YOU.

So what is YOUR superpower? Whatever it is... LEAN IN to that! Who are you around when you feel the most comfortable? When you are delivering your best advice one-on-one, how do you say it? When people are laughing at your humor or enjoying your conversation, what are you saying? How do you sound? Whatever that tone, energy or presence, bring THAT voice to your public speaking. Become THAT person. When you're on the microphone, speak to the audience as if you are having that same one-on-one conversation in private. That's how you should look and sound if you want to have the most impact and influence.



Think like a Doctor.

Consider the routine checkup at the doctors office. Would any responsibly practicing physician write a prescription without first understanding the patients' current health condition? Of course not! Their step-one is to find out what's going on with the patient- (I.e. *'Where are you feeling the pain? What happens when you try and...?' What steps have you taken thus far?'*) Consider your audience of listeners to be your patents. Like the doctor, we too (as experts) must first excavate to understand the condition of our audience prior to penning our advice, message or recommended solutions. We must first get clear on *where it hurts!*

Think like a Journalist

Journalists are indeed master presenters - skilled at pitching stories and hard hitting news to the public in a way that is designed to grab viewers' attention, think differently and inspire fast action. Sourcing psychology, brain science and the art of seduction, they come up with titles - click bait worthy one-liners that hook us and get us interested in reading more or listening further

They are always looking to draw you in with catchy headlines and titles to keep you engaged. As you are planning your message, keep it simple and relevant by thinking in headlines! What is your bottom line point that you are driving to?... Say that!

KEY: This is NOT the time to DATA dump, give them a history lesson or a full on lecture on your general subject matter. Just get to the point of what you want them to know or do... and IF they want the deep-dive, background or more details, let them know that it is available.

Show them the way out.

Later that evening in my company presentation I pointed out a time that a prospective client called in and requested a service... something that we should be offering, but don't. I talked about how I could've earned a 6-figure paying client from that call and then said- *'how many of you get calls JUST like these? How many of you have the HEART to just WANT to DO something about this but can't because you KNOW we don't have the offering OR the capability?'* Heads began to nod. *'How many of you have lost out on a potential commission and felt frustrated because you couldn't help the person on the other end of the line?'* Then I popped the question: *'What if?'*... I then pointed out how each person would benefit if my solution was the chosen solution. I showed them where they each had some skin in the game, connected my solution to their pain, and by doing so obligated them to vote on my idea.

Point out the elephant in the room (subtly).

If everyone's thinking it... if everyone's talking about it, and you KNOW it... then you bare the burden of addressing it... so that your listeners can move on from it. That day in my presentation, I understood that a key pain point on everyones mind was a recent layoff that had just swept our company. The thing on everyones mind was *'am I next to go?'* So in my message, I pointed out the elephant in the room, essentially how my proposed idea, not only involved each of their contribution, but in a way that played to their unique and individual value. And how my idea could empower each of them to ultimately be *'recession proof'*. And that as long as my idea was alive and well, that everyone

would have a great deal of value to contribute as perceived by leadership.



CLARITY is your most attractive feature.

Ask any CEO or stakeholder, what advice they would give to people who deliver presentations to them...They will all likely say something to the tune of- "*Get to the point! And quickly please!*" What is the ask? Do you want more department funding? Support? More independence?

If you don't have clarity on your bottom line message or request, then my advice is to stop! Get clarity first and then proceed.

In any message, transparency and clarity are key. Think of any influencer, speaker or widely known personality. What makes them engaging? What makes them influential? I can guarantee you the common thread between all of them is their high level of message clarity! They are clear on their mission, clear on their stories and lessons. They are clear on their intention and they can unpack it all in a soundbite!

Anytime I am writing a new keynote speech or preparing to be interviewed on someone's podcast or radio show, I am always careful to do a deep excavation and inventory of my understanding and connection to the topic I will be discussing. The more clear you are on the topic and your connection to it, the more attractive you will be to your listeners.

What is your level of understanding as it relates to your message?

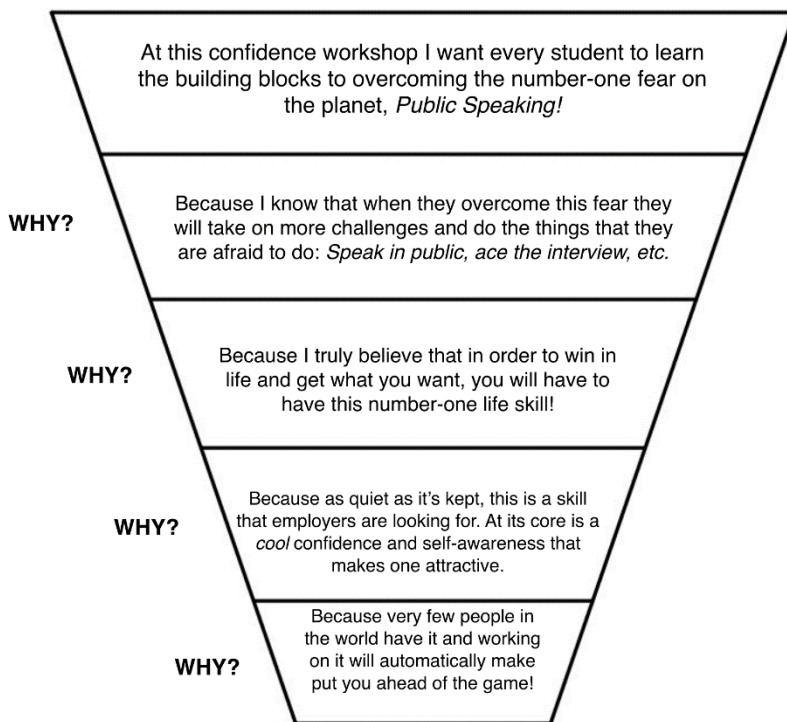
For every speech I write, workshop I create or interview I prepare for, I constantly do this activity several times along the way as I am preparing. *The 5-WHY's To Attaining Clarity* exercise unveils dormant insights, new perspectives and valuable stories that I hadn't

previously been aware of! These new awarenesses have a way of keeping me focused, clear and influential as I am creating my message content. It will do the same for you!

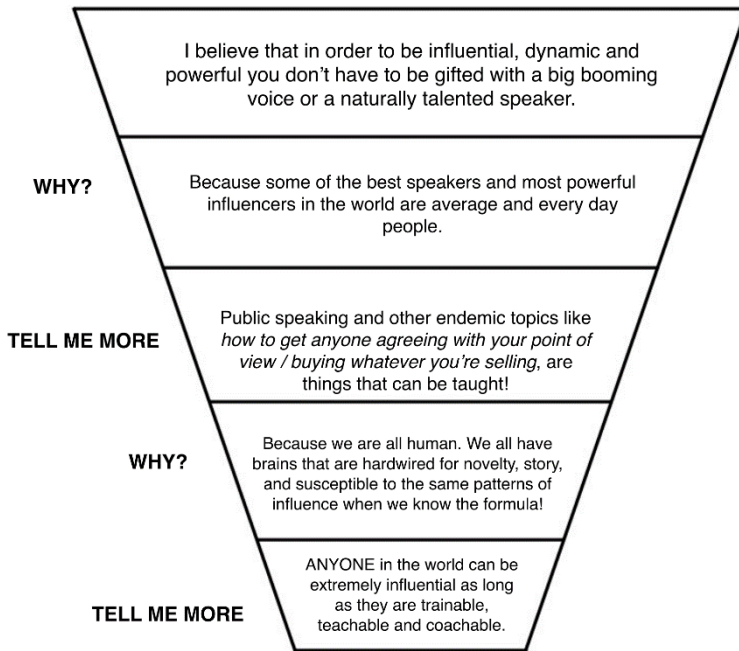
[Below] Begin with a leading question at the top of the funnel shape. Answer the question and then proceed to answer each question beneath it. Write down your answers and whatever else comes to mind. As you take this activity seriously you will begin to uncover insights (layer by layer) that you hadn't previously thought about. You'll begin to remember pain points, thoughts, stories that you had forgotten and a wealth of content that will help you help your audience of listeners. I refer to this deep excavation as going a *mile-deep*. Because now you are digging and exploring beneath the surface to get to the really 'good stuff'. The experiences, lessons, embarrassments, intentions and things that audiences really want to hear about. And they will love you for it because what an audience truly desires from a speaker, is authenticity!

Conciseness + Clarity = Attractiveness

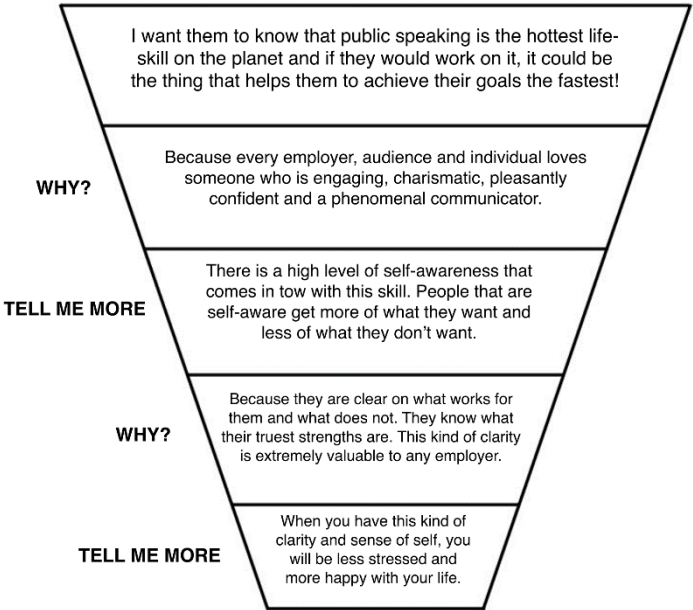
[Funnel 1] (Intention) What do you intend to achieve through your message?



[Funnel 2] What are your closely held beliefs as it relates to your message topic?



[Funnel 3] What do you want listeners to (know, do or think) as a result of hearing your message?



When you're clear and confident you'll use powerful language.

As listeners, we need to know that you are absolutely sure and certain of everything that you're saying, no matter what you say. So avoid using phrases like *kind of* or *sort of*... You must be sure! You must be certain! Try using the following phrases to express more confidence in your messages:

What is clear to me is _____

What I am certain of is _____

What we must understand is _____

What we must recognize here is _____

_____ is absolutely the way forward.

If we do nothing _____ will be the result.

I am confident that _____.



Go a mile-deep. and Keep it there!

Come out from behind yourself. Step in to the conversation and make it REAL.

Finding your voice, that magical bridge that connects you and your listeners, is not an external search, but an internal one. How do we achieve this synergy? How do we relate to our listeners in a way that causes them to trust and engage with us intimately?

It is done by sharing you experiences!

Share your stories. Share the mistakes that you've made, but how you course corrected. Share the embarrassing moments that you endured, the failures that you stumbled on, the part you played and the solution you found. Share how you went back and made up for something you did, the person you are now as a result and the lessons you carry with you.

That is how you find your voice.

That is how people come to trust you quickly. In most cases, what holds you back from connecting with your listeners is the '*veneer*'. The facade of perfection that most believe they need to exude in order to have impact, when in reality, your listeners really just want to know that you are human! They want to hear about your struggles, your shortcomings, your lessons learned all so that they can relate to you. That is called going a *mile-deep*.

Simply put, there is power in imperfection!

While most speakers fear the prospect of vulnerability or opening up, your vulnerability will prove to be powerful. Your stories (mistakes, lessons and experiences) make you human. Your humanity makes you influential.

Every public speaking client that I work with is a bigwig. They are major players at the top of their game yet each of them struggle (prior to encountering me) because they are dancing around all of the things they should say- The truth! Their real story! Bottom line, you must share your vulnerable moments, the things that make you human, because that's the stuff that will help people open up to your persuasion.

Your BEST message will be the one where you go a mile-deep and keep it there...

Many presenters are under the delusion that when presenting, *more data* is the way to win people over. Credentials, examples and proof points are essential to making a business case, however, it isn't everything. When persuading, if we want true victory, we need to appeal to people's emotions.

Get under their skin.

When I presented my idea to my company (everyone else had ideas that were just as good, with accompanying data to back up their claims). What they did not have was the emotional connector that resonated with the audiences hearts, desires, pain points or their unspoken ambitions.

Think about your personal experience in relation to the topic. What have you been through? What have you witnessed or took part in? What mistakes have you made? What lessons have you learned? What stories can you tell? Write them all down. Those will end up being your BEST messages and talks.

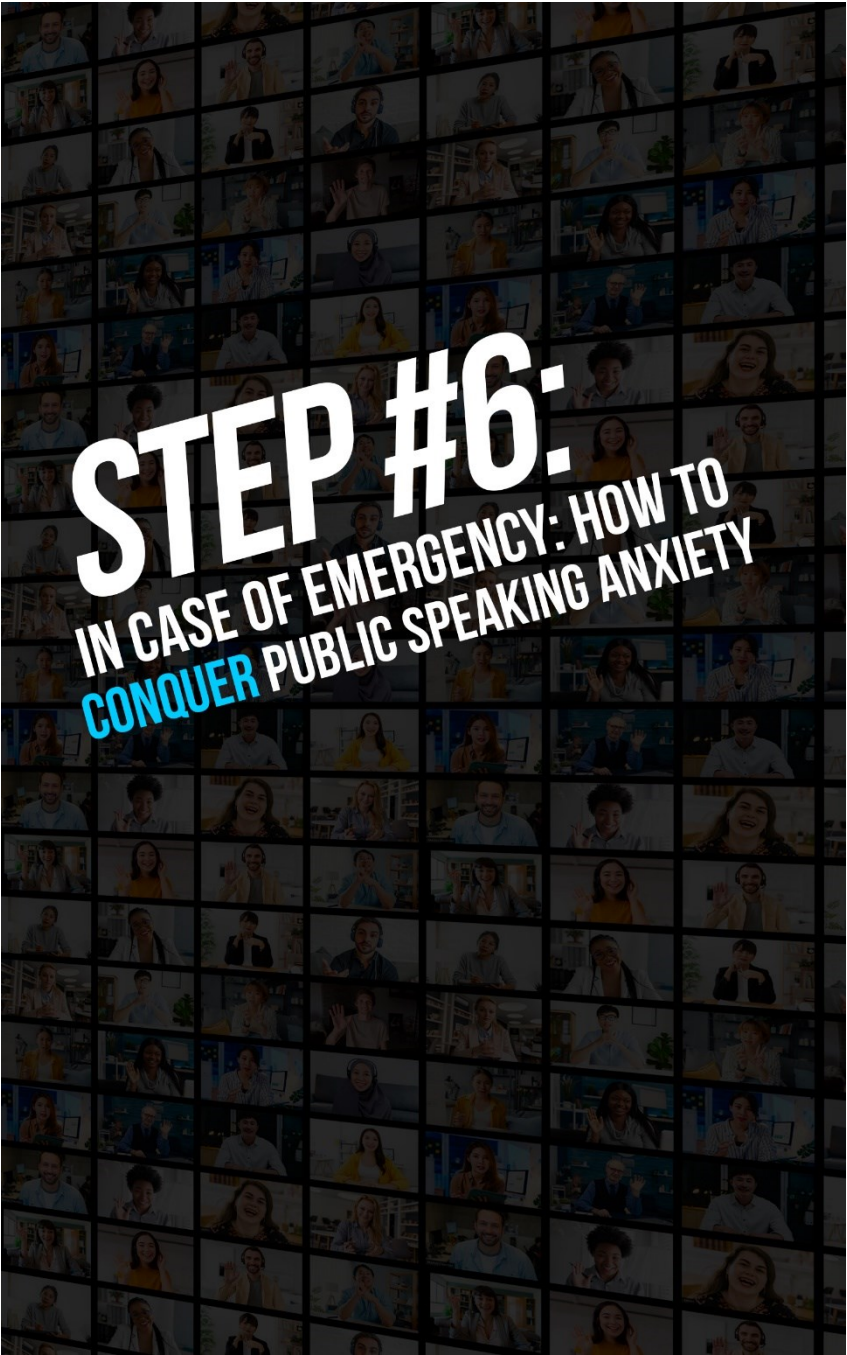
Ways to go a mile-deep:

1. Point out the elephant in the room
2. Tell the truth

3. Tell a story

Don't avoid it. Don't skirt around it. Tell it! Tell us about a time when you screwed up, or made a mistake but went back and made up for it. As presenters, we're usually so quick to fall back for fear of being vulnerable, but vulnerability is the magic sauce that keeps people tuned in and persuaded.

Want to find your voice and always make an impact on your listeners? That's how you do it. By being authentic in sharing what's real to you. The things you've seen and experienced. The lessons you've learned and the things you've overcome. Do this and you will always have power and influence when you present! Listeners cannot resist authenticity or a good story. That is the number one-way to hypnotize an audience and get us to lock-in to whatever you say.



When in Crisis, just Keep it simple!

Ever practice your message multiple times, only to walk RIGHT into the room (or on camera), feel the nerves, and all of a sudden, you've forgotten your message? This has happened to me many times, believe it or not!

What to do when your nerves are getting the best of you...

Write, Recite & Rewrite

Believe it or not, public speaking anxiety, right before you speak, can be a great opportunity. This actually happened to me. There I am in the auditorium, at my company's business case competition. Every other group is going up and presenting one-by-one, and as the time is drawing nearer for me to present, I can't focus on anything else anyone is saying, I'm not engaged in anything other than worry and nerves. I'm now in panic and crisis mode.

What I decided to do in that moment was pull out a pocket sized journal, right there in the auditorium, while other presenters were on stage. I told myself: *‘Okay Jarrod... You’ve forgotten your entire presentation... So now, what are we going to tell them? What do these listeners truly care about? Okay... Write it down. Next- What’s the most important thing you want them to know? Okay... Write it down. Next- How do they need to hear it? Okay... Write it down. Next- what story or examples do you want to share? Okay... Write it down. And lastly, how does your proposed solution help solve their problems or serve them? Okay... Write it down. Now Jarrod, when they call your name, just get up to the stage... and say THAT! No matter what was written in your presentation...*

Once I had that, I just took my pen and my writing hand, and began to rewrite THOSE talking points... Over and over and over. Each time I rewrote what I was going to say, new and creative ways for me to say what I wanted to say, began to emerge.

Just answer these questions:

What is their pain?

What's the implication if nothing changes?

What is your solution?

How will life be better when they implement your solution?

What's your story? How do YOU personally relate to all of this?

What is the next SIMPLE step they need to take for this to work?

And most important... How do THEY need to HEAR it?

How will you say it?

I just wrote THAT... over and over and over... all the way until they called my name! By the time I hit the stage, I became confident... And all of a sudden, EVERYTHING ELSE that I wanted to say ORIGINALLY (that I had forgotten) began flowing out of me! It was like MAGIC! By allowing myself to keep my message sweet and simple.



Bottom line, most presenters don't know their message as well as they think they do.

One of the most powerful weapons in your communications arsenal is bringing clarity to complexity. The most attractive messages are clear, simple, and are able to be delivered in a soundbite. Now that your message is written, try to explain it to a child (analogies will be your friend!). This is a test of how well you can simplify your message. The more you simplify the easier it will be for larger groups of people to understand.

I teach a children's leadership class (6-9 year olds) twice per month at a school and we deal with some pretty complex lessons surrounding confidence, motivation, faith, 'the golden rule', creating a legacy with positive intentions - really abstract and some distant concepts. One of my youngest students, Lucas, always reminds me to keep it simple.

Whenever they don't understand something- when something doesn't have enough color or simplicity, they'll start raising their hands to ask questions. This is exactly how your adult listeners are. Except they don't typically raise their hands they just tune you out.

As experts in our fields, we often make the mistake of assuming that people know more than they actually do. As an example:

One my (6-9 year old) students once asked- *'Mr. Jarrod, what's A.D.D?'* Another kid shouted back- *'...No: it's called A.D.H.D!'* Then they all looked to me for the conclusive and simple definition. Well, being that I'm no medical expert, the last thing I wanted to do was add more confusion to the pot, so I went straight to Google, and as I began to recite the definition - (*'...A chronic condition marked by persistent inattention,*

hyperactivity, and sometimes impulsivity...'), I then realized that this technical definition was falling on deaf ears.

It needed to be made simple. So I used an analogy...

I asked them to each name the fastest car they could think of. They shouted out different answers - *'Ferrari! Lamborghini! Tesla! Bugatti!'*. I then said- *'So A.D.H.D is a lot like having a Ferrari for a brain, with bicycle brakes...'* I proceeded to share how the Google article listed how some of the leading inventors who came up with the coolest inventions were also A.D.H.D.

Bottom line, analogies can be powerful tools to help your audience understand and remember your message.



How to know if your message will work...

So how do you know if your message will work?

Maybe you have a new story or joke that you want to try but you're not sure if it will land. Here's what you do... You test run it! Try it out on a group of friends, professionals or other colleagues. Chances are if it works in those settings, it will likely work for the real talk.

Your brain needs time to get accustomed to hearing your voice deliver your message. The last thing you want to do is test-drive your content in-the-moment when you are on stage. That's when you freeze up, forget your points and bomb, LIVE. No master magician, NBA player, stage actor or performer delivers their content or does *their thing* without having run through several rigorous stage rehearsals (or at least shooting 300 to 400 free-throw shots in a single practice).

Before you hit the 'big stage' or open your laptop camera, you need some realistic practice. The best speakers in the world practice delivering their messages live (literally dozens of times) prior to taking the stage. Honestly, you need this time in order to test your content, get comfortable with it and perfect it prior to *showtime!* The best way to do this is by *taking your show on the road*. Look for as many chances as you can to deliver your message: (At a friends house. At church. At an event. At an open mic night. In your living room on camera. In front of your co-workers or friends). And then invite them to give you their honest and most unbiased thoughts (either written, verbal or even confidential). This will be the best feedback you will

receive. Take note of the responses and tweak your message or delivery from there.

Do this so when you get there, you can be present...

You want to be present, so you can get *'lost in the moment'*. But when you're unpracticed, you're stressed and not truly present. You're nervously thinking about what you're supposed to say next, rather than feeling your audience out, listening to your gut and being open to saying things in-the-moment. This is where speech magic happens. When you say something unexpected that absolutely lands! But you cannot do that if you are unpracticed.

Record and Re-watch...

Now comes a big, audacious, hairy challenge... Practice your message OUT LOUD. Even if you've been to this rodeo a thousand times or delivered this same message time and time again. Every listener audience is different. But let's take this a step further- Record yourself delivering your message and then watch the replay. The reason a replay can feel so awkward is because it's the only time we get a TRUE mirror image of how we look and sound.

But THAT's not how I sound!!

The voice you hear when you speak is the combination of sound carried along your internal both paths. When you listen to a recording of yourself speaking, however, the bone-conducted pathway that you consider part of your "normal" voice is eliminated, and you hear only the air-conducted component in unfamiliar isolation. You sound different on video because you are now seeing and hearing yourself the way everyone else experiences

you- which feels foreign and awkward. Use this as an opportunity to see yourself how others see and experience you. Notice what you're doing extremely well- and keep doing it. Notice a few things you could improve on and work on them.



I'll say it again....

Your imperfection makes you human. And your humanity makes you influential!

When training people to hit the stage, they'll often ask me if they should stand in a certain spot, not use their hands as much, or focus on not saying certain words. I often instruct them to do what comes most natural and whatever makes them feel most powerful and confident. Obviously if we're training together for at least a day or longer, I will point out any distracting gestures, inflections or language barriers, but for the most part, practice on becoming more of your natural self.

Use your *'indoors'* voice.

It can be super tempting, when public speaking, to shout in a ridiculously loud voice as if no one can hear you. The day I delivered my winning presentation, I used my natural voice... my one-on-one *indoors* voice. Think of it this way, if you were speaking to someone one-on-one, would you be shouting? Likely not. And if you were, would your shouting draw them in or push them away? My counsel here, do what you know will draw them *in* to you. The same applies for virtual presentations. It should sound like a 1-1 conversation when you begin speaking.



Push back and challenge.

One of the most powerful ways to keep your listeners engaged is to ask them questions! Questions keep them involved in your message, their brains' stimulated and tee'd up to hear what you say next.

This does not mean that they have to answer back! I only ask questions to get their *wheels turning*. It keeps their brains stimulated as I'm talking. And ultimately, the experience they will remember is being engaged.

Questions I might ask:

1. Where were you when you...?
2. Who inspired you to...?
3. What was it like when you...?
4. What was the moment when you decided...?
5. How does it feel to now know...?

(If I make them think about a happy memory WHILE I'm talking, then the EXPERIENCE they will remember) is a happy feeling associated with my voice when they think about me later!

The Audience Pushback Moment and The Challenge:

A pushback moment is where you get really clear and tell your listeners how your message is relevant to them... Tell them exactly what the point of your message is and what you hope they take away from it. As smart as they may be, your listeners need for you to spell it all the way out for them! Never assume that they will all magically arrive at the conclusion that you hope they will!

An audience challenge is the moment where you tell your audience what you want them to do with what you

just shared. Where you make them “take it on” or challenge them to do or think.

Here was my *Audience Pushback Moment* the day I presented in the business pitch competition:

‘My experience may not be your experience, but I know that we all have had a time where we couldn’t deliver a proposal to a client on time because of this software roadblock. And we all know how frustrating and painful it is to miss client deadlines! That could easily mean a high six-figure deal lost.... and going to a competitor! A deal that could have easily been yours! A deal that you’d already put in the hours burning the midnight oil on. A deal that would’ve meant \$15K, \$25K and for some of you \$50K in commissions that could’ve been sitting in your bank accounts RIGHT NOW!... But isn’t.. and not because you didn’t do the work- but because of a software roadblock!’

Then I popped the question: *‘How many of you know what that feels like?’*... [Many heads begin to nod in the audience]. This is a pushback moment (where I also popped a question in the end).

Here was my challenge statement:

‘So in just a few moments, YOU are going to have the chance to decide what matters most to you... And there are many amazing things that you can choose. But I know that none of you wants to miss out on spending time with your family or loved ones- because you had to burn the midnight oil to close a deal, and then miss out on another payday all because of outdated software. So you tell me... Which one matters to you more? [end]

I recently trained one of my clients on this very method and witnessed her deliver it. She’s a high school English teacher and was asked to train a group of district

educators on classroom management. Here's what she said:

'You may very well be their last possible chance at safety, care and dependability, before they step out into a cold, cruel and uncaring world. What are you going to leave them with?'

That closing pushback and challenge statement left the audience in chills! But it was exactly what they needed to hear to take fast and inspired action on her proposed solution. What is your pushback and challenge statement?



One of the most commonly asked questions I get is-
'Jarrod, what should I wear when I have to speak?'

Every time I select an outfit for a speaking engagement, it has 5-jobs:

1. The outfit should be mute enough to send the attention to my face.
2. The outfit needs to make me feel my most powerful.
3. The outfit needs to make me feel comfortable.
4. The outfit needs to fit within any required dress code or event theme.
5. The outfit should be a cut above the average outfit in the room.

Let's borrow a lesson from the modeling industry shall we? Take a look at any modeling comp card or actor headshot and you'll notice that their outfits are very plain and simple. The subject is usually wearing a plain white, gray or black V-neck top- free of distracting textures, patterns or sequences. The purpose of the outfit is to be mute enough to send all of the attention to their face, their eyes and their expressions. The attention should never be on your outfit. The attention should always be on your face.