



10 Ways to Empower Your Communication

By Fran Watson

There is so much more to know about conversation than anyone could ever realize. You can watch talk shows; listen to radio programs; attend clubs dedicated to public speaking such as Toastmasters; and have ordinary everyday conversations, but certain rules still apply when it comes to speaking. Even though it's your mouth that's doing the work, your brain needs to be put in gear before you speak. It needs to work twice as hard to effectively churn out the information you know. So what better way to start learning to be an effective communicator than to get to know the very person closest to you: yourself.



1. What you know.

Education is all about learning the basics, but to be an effective speaker you must practice what you've learned. At Toastmasters clubs we learn that we all have our limitations, but that doesn't mean we can't learn to keep up and share what we know.

2. Listening.

It's just as important as asking questions, and sometimes even more important. As we listen to others, we learn good ways to communicate and ways that we don't want to communicate. Also sometimes listening to the sound of our own voice can help us to be a little more confident with ourselves and to say the things we believe in with conviction.

3. Humility

We all make mistakes. When speaking we may slur our words, stutter, and maybe even mispronounce certain words even though we know what they mean. Don't be afraid to ask if you're saying the word correctly. Sometimes you can make a joke out of your mistake. You may make everyone laugh.

4. Eye Contact

Eye contact is very important when you are communicating with someone, whether as an individual in a conversation or speaking to a group. It makes a connection between you and the people you are talking to.



5. Humor

A little bit of humor can do wonders to lift the tension, or boredom, when making your speech. You'll get the attention of the majority of the crowd. When you use personal stories, they'll feel that you're approachable and as human as they are.

6. Group Interaction

Interaction is all about mingling with other people. You'll find that you will get a lot of ideas, and you will get to know more about the people in your group.



7. Me, Myself, and I

Are there are times you sing to yourself in the shower? I know I do! You might also practice your speeches in the shower. Listening to the sound of your own voice while you practice your speech, especially in front of a mirror, can help you identify places where pauses would work and correct areas where you need to stress your pitch.

8. Say It With a Smile

A smile says it all, much like eye contact. When you face your audience with a smile you will usually get a smile back. You draw them in and you begin to relax so that you can better express what you want to say.

9. A Role Model

Who is your role model? There must be at least one or two people in your life you have listened to when they're at a public gathering or maybe at church. Take a mental note of how they emphasize what they say. This can help you once you take center stage.

10. Preparation

Some people like to write things down on index cards, some memorize their speeches, while other resort to looking at their notes written on the palm of their hand (not for clammy hands, please). Practice enough to be comfortable with what you know.

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