

8 Expert Tips That Will Make Your Next Speech Unforgettable



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1



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[Episode #31](#)



#1: Deliver a powerful opening line

According to Mike, audiences pay the most attention during the first seven seconds of a speech. But what do most of us do with that time? We waste it warming up with a tepid introduction:

“Hey, I’m Donald, so happy to be here with you guys today.”

Instead, hook your audience from the beginning with a direct, intriguing statement. A perfect example is this line from Josh Shipp’s TED Talk:

“As a kid, I mastered the art of getting kicked out of foster homes.”

What is a powerful opening line you could deliver at your next presentation?

#2: Be vulnerable

What is a vulnerable statement or story you could share in your next presentation about your past to show you have empathy for your audience?

Remember: Share mistakes or lessons learned from the **past**. For example, “I used to think we should do *this*. But now I realize we should do *this other thing*.”

#3: Back up your claims with evidence

You'll give yourself more authority if you can point to sources outside yourself that back up the claims you're making.

What are one or two data points you could share to support your claims?

#4: Use anecdotes

Mike reminds us to choose powerful anecdotes that show the transformation we're talking about in our talk. In other words, don't tell anecdotes for their own sake. Make sure they make a point.

Sir Ken Robinson gave one of the most popular TED talks of all time, with over 43 million views and counting. Starting around the three-and-a-half-minute mark, Ken simply tells a couple anecdotes about the creativity of children, both of which underscore the point of his talk. I love the first one:

I heard a great story recently of a little girl who was in a drawing lesson. She was six, and she was at the back, drawing, and the teacher said this girl hardly ever paid attention, and in this drawing lesson, she did. The teacher was fascinated. She went over to her, and she said, "What are you drawing?" And the girl said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." And the teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like." And the girl said, "They will in a minute."

What is one anecdote you could share in your next presentation to help you prove a point?

#5: Craft short-term and long-term calls to action

Mike suggests you call your audience to action in two ways.

First, give them an immediate call to action. It might be:

- “Sign up for my emails and I’ll send you a free welcome gift.”
- “Go to this site and request the slide deck.”
- “Text this number and I’ll send you a free video series with more details about this topic.”

But don’t stop there. Mike also recommends you give your audience a long-term call to action. This gives your listeners a future vision of how what you just talked about is going to be meaningful in the long term.

What is a short-term call to action you could offer in your next presentation?

What is a long-term call to action you could offer in your next presentation?

#6: Tell audiences about traps

We are hardwired to pay attention to the problems in a story. As soon as you mention a trap, or a failure, or a mistake, the audience perks up a little bit. Use this to your advantage in your speeches. Create tension by talking about the common pitfalls your audience may experience.

Brainstorm a few “trap statements” for your next presentation. Here are a few prompts:

- “Now you may think that you have done this well, but ...”
- “One of the traps that we’ve seen our customers fall into is...”
- “There is a subtle difference between that and this other thing, but if you do this other thing...”

#7: Plan out a final closing statement

Just like you wrote a compelling opening line, you want to craft the same kind of memorable statement to end your talk. The ending is important, according to Mike, because of the principle of recency, which says that the last thing people hear tends to be what they remember best.

What is a powerful closing line you could deliver at your next presentation?

A lot of us end our talks with a Q&A. Because you can't control the final question -- and it may not be one you want to end on -- plan a final closing statement that will make sense after the Q&A.

#8: Have fun

Here's one of my favorite things Mike said during this podcast: "If you are not having fun with the talk, there is no chance your audience is going to."

Our audience mirrors our emotions while we're up there. You tell them whether or not to be comfortable with you. If you're comfortable, they will be, too. If you're skittish or flighty, they will be, too.

Brainstorm ways you can interject more fun into your next presentation.

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