



How to be a great presenter and communicator

How to produce and deliver a winning presentation Part 5 (of 5): from You - being yourself, but who are you?

This is the 5th article in the five-part series of **The Rules**.

The Rules are THE guide to help you communicate and present with confidence, style and passion. They are...

Prepared Goals

Part 1 (of 5): Being Prepared and Knowing your Goals

Command Attention

Part 2 (of 5): Command Attention through your Voice and Body Language

with Passion

Part 3 (of 5): Passion for what you do, plus your Facial Expression

Part 4 (of 5): Passion through your Voice

from You

Part 5 (of 5) this article: Being Yourself, but who are you?

Being Yourself is a phrase that is widely used within the context of being a great communicator, presenter and leader, but what does it really mean?

It means being genuine and authentic.

It goes without saying that when you have a genuine passion for a given subject or activity you generally exude genuine interest and authenticity when it comes to talking about it.

Genuine authenticity in this arena means speaking from the heart, with honesty and integrity. It may be that you have a genuine passion for the project your team or organisation has just launched, or it may be for gender equality in the workplace, or agricultural efficiency in developing countries, or access to a solid education for every child on the planet, or it might be for golf, football, tennis or rugby. Whatever it is, the audience will instinctively know if you are the real deal or the great pretender.

However, for many people Being Yourself can present a real challenge.

Many clients over the years, when I have requested "Come on, be yourself." have said, "But this is me! I am being myself!" followed by comments like...

- "I'll never have a great voice. I'll always speak really quietly and cautiously"
- "I'll never be able to speak with great confidence!"
- "I can't make eye contact because then I forget what I was going to say!"
- "I'll always be nervous and have shaky breathing, it's just the way I'm wired!"
- "At meetings people interrupt me or talk over me! They probably always will."
- "I'm just not as bright as the others!"
- "I don't have as many qualifications as the rest of the team!"
- "I get nervous when there are people more senior than me in the room!"
- Men "I get nervous when there are women more senior than me in the room!"
- Women "I get nervous when there are men more senior than me in the room!"

So what we have here are widely used and often heard comments that demonstrate fear and self-limiting beliefs.

If we start to track back through our life, back to the formative years, we will often find the root cause of a self-limiting belief or a series of them.

The last three examples above are about feeling anxious when we are talking to or presenting to people more senior than us, in general, or gender specific. These feelings can also often be tracked back to the experiences of our childhood and formative years.

For example we may have had a parent or grandparent or auntie or uncle that was rather overbearing, negative, fierce or just plain and simply discouraging towards us.

A quiet and cautious voice is quite a classic case. One of my clients who was speaking in a very quiet, flat, monotone and gravelly voice said that his voice had always been like that. I asked him to track back through his life to see if he could find a reason for his quiet voice.

The next time we met he had a big smile on his face as he told me that he had found the cause. He said he was one of six siblings and when he was very young his parents used to tell him he spoke too loudly and they used to tell him to keep quiet, not to speak louder than his brothers and sisters, to shut up!

When he got to school he had an inquisitive mind which led him to ask lots of questions in class, but instead of congratulating him for having a hungry mind, his teachers constantly told him to be quiet, to shut up!

When he eventually got out into the big wide world his new boss told him he talked too much and too loudly. In other words, shut up!... again!!

My client then said that, if anyone looked at the story of his formative years, it was hardly surprising that he had ended up speaking with a very, very quiet, gravelly voice, because he had basically been trained like a puppy dog to behave in a certain way in order to please people.

For this particular client, after that realisation, that moment of epiphany, the penny dropping moment of self-discovery, he said it felt like having a veil lifted and immediately he found his big, true voice again.

He had to do some memory bank rewinding and some deep soul searching to go back to those early years, but he hit the bullseye and claimed his voice back.

For me, it was amazing and incredibly fulfilling to witness first hand the immediate changes.

It maybe that he did have a loud voice as a child and young person and it may be that he did need to calm it down, but it didn't mean he needed to put his voice in a box and shut it away for years.

In my experience many people are actually good or very good communicators, but they carry the burden of a deep, inner, low opinion of themselves. The result is that they convince themselves they are not good, or that they are awful. More often than not these people have done such a superb job of convincing themselves over the years (not just in communicating, but generally) that they don't even realise they have convinced themselves. They just think it's always been that way!

These people are always pretty shocked, amazed and often emotional when I give them positive, affirmative feedback. They look over their shoulder, presuming I am talking about someone else... surely anyone but them!

So who would you like to be?

How about yourself for starters?

Would you like to be confident, prepared, calm, relaxed, self-aware, knowledgeable, engaging, caring, thoughtful, respectful, loving, honourable, fair, a good listener, empathetic, compassionate and passionate in all scenarios and situations?

Presuming the answer is YES to above, then get prepared because this is a world that opens up to you when you realise that this is not about you becoming someone you are not, it's about you allowing yourself to become who you are truly capable of being.

When it comes to delivering your message, when

you know who you are and what you stand for, you can say to yourself, I am not going to present, I am going to be consciously aware of my presence. In this space you can be honest, transparent, genuine and authentic.

If you try to be something you are not, people smell it a mile off and their level of trust in you is put to the test.

So how do we get ourselves out of our often self-imposed prisons of self doubt, fear, uncertainty, insecurity, etc

So here's what to do and in the following order...

1: Watch this excellent TED Talk from Professor Amy Cuddy of Harvard Business School.

2: After digesting Amy's Ted Talk, specifically taking onboard her immensely powerful and highly personal message "Fake it until you become it!" produce your Personal Identity Statement. Here's the instructions...

Your Personal Identity Statement

On the left hand side of the document type the groups and people listed further below. Against each group/person add, in bullet point form, how you are presently perceived, or if you don't know for sure, how you believe you are presently perceived by the various people and groups listed below.

Some of you may have received a 360 survey at work so this will help you fill in the details for at least some of the people or groups on the left hand side. If you have not received a 360 survey then you can ask the people you have identified on the left hand side to give you honest, no holds barred feedback. However, it's also perfectly OK to complete the left hand side purely from your own perception, i.e. as mentioned above, how you believe you are presently perceived.

So, you add bullet points for how you are or how you believe you are presently perceived by 1: Your friends and then 2: by your family and so on and so forth. The bullet points will most likely be different, or at least slightly different for each one. Feel free to add people or groups or delete any that are not relevant to you...

- Friends
- Family
- Significant Other
- Children
- Work colleagues/Peers
- Direct Reports
- CEO

- Chairman
- Acquaintances
- Strangers
- Other

Once you have completed the left hand side of the document, on the right hand side complete (again, in bullet point form) how you would like to be perceived by those same people and groups. Referring back to the previously mentioned restrictive thought process, this is if you had waved a magic wand or rubbed a genie bottle and you are now able to create the ideal YOU. How would you like to be perceived?

Next step, from the bullet points that you create on the right hand side (how I would like to be perceived), you then create on a new page your Personal Identity Statement. This states all you want to be... and you know what... this is absolutely 100% how YOU CAN be perceived. YES, in real life, not just after waving a magic wand, or rubbing a genie bottle... but actually, in real life, you can 100% be the person you 100% want to be. The only thing/person actually realistically holding you back is YOU and the limiting beliefs you have allowed to govern your life and your behaviours.

Once you have completed your Personal Identity Statement print it out. Stick it on your fridge. Put it on your bedside table. Place it in your bathroom. Put it in your car. Stick it on the inside of your front door.

Basically, print multiple copies and put it in as many visible places as possible for you to see it on a daily and regular basis. Then, in the words of Amy Cuddy, fake it until you become it!

So if you haven't watched Amy's TED Talk yet, now is the time. This will ensure that what I am passing on here makes perfect sense to you.

When you truly know yourself, standing or sitting in front of an audience with real presence and genuine confidence, being the big person that you are, is not something you suddenly have to switch on there and then in the moment, because it is there with you all the time. It will also help you hugely in all aspects of your life.

When you can do that, in the words of the great poet, William Ernest Henley, from his poem Invictus, you can truly declare...

I am the Master of my fate,

I am the Captain of my soul.

For more details www.yourvoiceispower.nl

My next article will help you be your genuine

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