**The Twelve Rules of Good Public Speaking No One Tells You About**

1. **Always tell the truth.** You’re not going to know everything, so don’t be afraid to embrace your own limitations. If you don’t know, own up to it, and don’t worry.
2. **Crush your topic.** You’re not going to know everything, but it’s your job to know as much as you can. If you’re a speaker on carved gold rabbits, then you need to know as much as humanly possible about those rabbits. Read up!
3. **By the end of the hour, you should be talking love.** You get attention by identifying a problem and playing it up. Look at the current American presidential candidates; you’d be pardoned for thinking that Armageddon was around the corner if you took them seriously. But by the end of the talk, you should be covering what it is that you love and what’s working in your world. Long-term careers are based on positive trajectories, not negative ones.
4. **You put your ideas out there; you can’t control what the audience does with them.** It’s your job to present your case with passion. The audience has its own issues, and you have no control over the extent to which they take up your ideas or not. Success is making your case, not in getting the most votes – or even a standing ovation.
5. **Keep it fresh.** I once worked with a speaker who had been giving the same speech for 16 years – even the same jokes. That’s not public speaking, that’s purgatory. It’s your job to keep renewing your talk with the latest developments in your field – and with new approaches.
6. **Keep practicing.** Public speaking is not perfection; it’s connection. But that means that you need to keep working on your game in order to make the connection stronger, always. Always be rehearsing.
7. **It won’t go the way you expect it to.** The military people always say that a strategy never survives the first shot. In the same way, a speech is always a contingency effort. Things will go wrong, or at least differently. You have to be prepared to change on the fly. Always.
8. **Forgive yourself for your mistakes.** Try to spend as little time as possible after your presentation wishing that you had said or done something differently. Of course you should study and learn from your mistakes, but don’t beat yourself up unnecessarily. That won’t do anything for you except give you scar tissue.
9. **Focus on the parts you love.** Don’t do something – especially for the long term – because someone else tells you it’s the right thing to do. Do it because it matters to you.
10. **You don’t always have to have a brilliant plan.** It will look to you at times as if everyone else is doing better, making smarter decisions, getting paid more, or getting better speaking venues. Don’t fall victim to Facebook Envy. Just keep tending your own garden. That’s your job.
11. **Success is where you find it.** If you let other people define your success, you’re always going to be chasing something you can’t catch. But your fans are out there, if you’re working hard and presenting with passion. So open yourself up to the good things that are happening, not what you think is necessary for your success before you’ve begun the game.
12. **Most successful people are successful because they work harder and stay longer than the others.** Over and over again, I’ve seen professional speaking success go to the people that outwork everyone else. It’s not a game for the hobbyist. It’s why speakers actually earn those apparently outrageous hourly speaking fees – it’s not just an hour. There are many, many hours involved to get to that podium.

7 Tips for Successful Public Speaking

1. **Speak with an intent to move people to action**. Know what you want your audience to do immediately after hearing your speech. If nobody does anything different than they would have done before you spoke – the value of your speech is zero.
2. **Start strong with a “grabber”**. A personal story, a quote from an expert or a shocking statistic – something that takes a hold of your audience and gets them hooked and opens their mind to your message. Give the audience a chance to see your personal connection to the topic.
3. **Structure your material in three sections**– grabber, middle, close. Know your material. Get really interested in the topic. Find good stories.
4. **Practice. Practice.** Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Work to control filler words; Practice, pause and breathe. Use a clock to check your timings and allow time for the unexpected.
5. **Know the audience.** Try to speak to one or two people in the audience as they arrive – they will be your allies in the audience – it is easier to speak to friends than to strangers.
6. **Know the setup.** Arrive in good time to check out the speaking area and get practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
7. **Relax.** Begin with a well prepared grabber. A relevant personal story is a great start.  It establishes your credibility.  It connects you to the audience and creates the right emotional atmosphere (and calms your nerves).

10 Tips for Public Speaking

### 1. Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!

All people feel some physiological reactions like pounding hearts and trembling hands. Do not associate these feelings with the sense that you will perform poorly or make a fool of yourself. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance.

The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice—a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique your performance.

### 2. Know Your Audience. Your Speech Is About Them, Not You.

Before you begin to craft your message, consider who the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organization pattern, and motivational statement.

### 3. Organize Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.

Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Make sure to grab the audience’s attention in the first 30 seconds.

### 4. Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.

Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.

### 5. Let Your Personality Come Through.

Be yourself, don’t become a talking head—in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.

### 6. Use Humor, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.

Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience’s attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. A story can provide that.

### 7. Don’t Read Unless You Have to. Work from an Outline.

Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you keep the focus on yourself and your message. A brief outline can serve to jog your memory and keep you on task.

### 8. Use Your Voice and Hands Effectively. Omit Nervous Gestures.

Nonverbal communication carries most of the message. Good delivery does not call attention to itself, but instead conveys the speaker’s ideas clearly and without distraction.

### 9. Grab Attention at the Beginning, and Close with a Dynamic End.

Do you enjoy hearing a speech start with “Today I’m going to talk to you about X”? Most people don’t. Instead, use a startling statistic, an interesting anecdote, or concise quotation. Conclude your speech with a summary and a strong statement that your audience is sure to remember.

### 10. Use Audiovisual Aids Wisely.

Too many can break the direct connection to the audience, so use them sparingly. They should enhance or clarify your content, or capture and maintain your audience’s attention.