



# **PRESENT LIKE A PRO!**

## **10-PART PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE**

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**Course Description:**

Would you prefer to awkwardly memorize bullet points and stumble through your speech, or would you rather learn how the pros do it? Learn the secrets of crafting a presentation that WOWs while also building your abilities as a presenter. If you want to grow your public speaking skills and be seen as a confident leader in your field, this is the course for you.

**Bio:**

Angela Lussier is a former shy girl turned award-winning professional speaker. She is the founder of the Speaker Sisterhood, the Speaking School for Women, and hosts Claim the Stage, a public speaking podcast for women. She is a three-time author, two-time TEDx presenter, and her work has been featured on the Huffington Post, Virgin.com, Entrepreneur, NBC, ABC, and Forbes. Her motto: Stop waiting. Start creating.



Hi there! Welcome to the Present Like a Pro 10-day course! As you've likely heard, public speaking is the #1 fear of adults (more than being eaten by a shark, which is *actually* dangerous). However, public speaking can be a great tool for your professional life, whether you are trying to be noticed for a promotion, be the face of your company, or promote your own business. It's also an amazing way to connect with customers, employees, colleagues, and new networks in your industry. By going through each lesson in this course, you won't get stuck stumbling through a presentation that bores your audience ever again.

Enjoy the adventure!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

## **LESSON #1: TALK ABOUT WHAT GETS YOU EXCITED**

To start, you're going to learn the most basic technique you'll need to get started as an engaging speaker that leaves a positive, lasting impression on your audience. This strategy may seem easy, but it requires deep thought and maybe even some trial and error when you start.

Think back to the last time you were in the audience watching someone speak and you were bored. You were thinking about your grocery list, your weekend plans, maybe even cleaning the litter box. Your mind was swirling and not engaged. Try to picture what the speaker was saying and doing that was making you tune out. Was it the lack of good information? Was it their tone? Their delivery? If you really think about it, the reason speakers are boring is because of one important problem: **they're talking about something that doesn't get *them* excited.**

How could they convey enthusiasm and interest in the subject to you if *they* don't even care about what they're saying?

If you want to avoid being a boring speaker, you have to pick a topic that lights you up. If you're not in charge of picking the topic, you need to find an angle that gets you excited. If you don't, you end up with a boring, lifeless bedtime story.

Speakers have their own style, ranging from loud and boisterous to quiet and stoic. While you may still be working on your speaking style (and we'll talk about that in upcoming lessons), know that your style doesn't really matter if you're not sharing something you love to talk about. There's no need to try to act a "certain way" on stage, the goal is to convey genuine enthusiasm and transfer that energy to the people in the audience. This is where connection starts!

Your Assignment: Practice by making a list of 5 potential subjects to speak about. When you have some alone time, try coming up with an impromptu speech about each subject, only 2-3 minutes long. Pay attention to how easily the ideas come to you, how you feel when you're saying them out loud, and the energy you are left with when you're done. Even this short exercise can give you insight into how you will act on stage because you're tricking your body into thinking it's the real thing!

My favorite place to practice is when I'm driving alone. I probably look crazy to the other drivers, but I use that time to try out new ideas and concepts for upcoming talks. I can tell the subject isn't one I want to pursue if I get distracted by the radio or start to trail off and lose focus.

You can also test out ideas by putting together a small group of friends or coworkers and asking them to rate your enthusiasm level for you while you give a few short practice speeches. The

best speakers are the ones who sincerely enjoy what they're presenting and can translate that to the people they are trying to motivate and inspire in their audience.

In the next lesson, you'll learn how to easily give a presentation that has your audience fully engaged and excited to learn from you.

## ***LESSON #2: WHO IS SITTING IN YOUR AUDIENCE?***

I was once asked to give a bride public speaking advice on her wedding day. I told her not to worry about the speech too much because in the grand scheme of time and space, none of this really mattered anyway.

Yeah, not what you want to tell someone on the biggest day of her life.

The lesson I learned that day is that you need to know your audience. I had given the same advice to many nervous public speakers in the past to try and help them minimize the pressure they were putting themselves under and it worked like a charm. That day, the bride likely wanted to punch me out for basically telling her that her wedding day didn't matter.

When you really want to connect with your audience, you have to be willing to put yourself in their shoes. What do they care about? What do they fear? What are their goals? What keeps them up at night? What are their challenges?

If you can successfully answer these questions, you can build a presentation that not only speaks to them, but also helps them. Knowing your audience helps you speak their language by including advice and stories they can relate to.

You wouldn't tell a bunch of high school students how to prepare for retirement, but some speakers are practically doing just that when they don't research their audience and don't understand who they are talking to.

Your Assignment: Before your next presentation, find out who will be in the audience. Find out where they work, what they do, what positions they hold, what industries they are in, why they are attending, and what they hope to achieve by attending your presentation. If you find out most of your audience will be made up of entry level sales professionals, your speech will be much different than if you were talking to an audience of CEOs. Put yourself in their position and try to answer the following questions:

- What do they care about?
- What do they fear?
- What are their goals?

- What keeps them up at night?
- What are their challenges?
- What do they want most?
- Which problems will you solve for them?
- How will you do this?

Assemble your talk in such a way that you weave in the answers to these questions while also telling stories from your own life or your experience with helping a customer/friend. For example, if an entry level sales professional is afraid of not making their quarterly sales quota, you might share a story of a time when you feared not meeting a goal and how you were able to accomplish it anyway.

Knowing your audience is critical if you want to build a real connection with them. Your goal as the speaker is to show them you are someone they can trust so they will follow your advice and take action to create real change.

Next time, you'll learn about the hidden power of using props in your presentations!

### **LESSON #3: DITCH POWERPOINT**

Today, we're going to talk about going beyond PowerPoint and other slide presentations and instead talk about real life props, like the ones you hold in your hands and touch. There are a variety of learning styles in any given audience, and yet we're often only appealing to the visual and auditory learners. What if we could also include the tactile learners and rouse the grabby child inside of all of us?

[This talk given by Seth Godin](#) is an amazing example of how props can enhance your presentation and add the "fun" element so often missing from adult learning. In it, he shares a story about Lamb Chop, the loveable sock puppet on TV in the 1980s. In his story, he was up for a film award and his only competition in the category was Lamb Chop. Rather than show a picture of Lamb Chop on a slide, he brought a stuffed doll of Lamb Chop. When Seth found out he lost the award to the sock puppet, he tossed the doll over his head. This action told the audience Seth was disappointed while also adding an element of visual humor.

I recently gave a talk about how to promote your business through the media and brought a variety of news clippings, printed articles, and marketing materials from my company. I passed them around and let the audience look at them as I told the story of how I was able to secure exposure in certain media outlets, what the promotion resulted in, and how these ideas could help them. I could have taken screenshots or photographs of the newspaper articles and put them all in a slideshow, but having physical pieces to pass around told a stronger story.

The best way to add props and physical items to your talk is by first putting your talk together and then looking for ways to integrate them. They should serve to enhance your presentation, not *be* your presentation (unless you're like Steve Jobs and you're introducing something along the lines of an iPhone).

Your Assignment: Next time you are giving a talk and you are tempted to use an image to represent an element of a story, think of how you could use a physical object instead. Get creative! Try costumes or accessories (hats, sunglasses, wigs), souvenirs, printed pictures, awards, physical representations of things (a stuffed monkey to represent a real monkey), food, or toys. All of these add-ons create more fun, more engagement, and more memorable presentations.

Next time, you'll learn how including your audience in your talk leads to a greater connection and a greater outcome each and every time.

## ***LESSON #4: MAKE IT INTERACTIVE***

There once was a story about a man who practiced and practiced and practiced his speech until he knew the entire presentation word for word. The day came when he got on stage in front of a full audience, delivered his speech perfectly without forgetting a word, and then walked off stage. He decided his talk was a success because it was delivered flawlessly. His audience, on the other hand, did not agree.

Today, we are going to talk about the importance of including your audience in your talk and how you can increase the effectiveness of your presentation if you ask questions and engage them in a conversation, rather than recite a memorized monologue.

Let's face it: no one likes to be talked at. We want to feel included, like we're part of the conversation. If you're giving a talk and people look sleepy, aren't making eye contact, or are looking down at their phone, these are indications that you are boring them and you need to do something to fix it. Here are three ways to make your speech interactive and keep your audience paying attention.

### **1. Ask a question.**

Asking, "What do you think about that?" isn't the best question because it's too open ended and is confusing to the audience. Try asking a more pointed question like, "Have you been to the library in the last year? If so, raise your hand." or, "Is anyone in the room gluten intolerant? If so, raise your hand." Of course, your question will need to apply to your talk, but if you can come up with a simple question that is easy for the audience to answer, they'll likely participate. Staying away from opinion questions and difficult concepts will make it easier for them to get involved and feel like you are talking *with* them, not *at* them. Try yes/no questions to start.

## **2. Ask for a volunteer.**

Creating a scenario that requires you work with someone in the audience to illustrate an idea is a great way to wake up your audience and get them to pay attention. Remember to always ask for a volunteer rather than pick someone out. Introverts, shy people, and people who don't do well in front of crowds won't appreciate being singled out and asked to perform in front of their peers. When you ask for volunteers, you will get to work with someone who is happy to be in front of the group and will likely work with you to achieve your goal. For example, if you wanted to teach your audience how to act in a job interview, you could have a volunteer come up to the front of the room with you and act as the interviewer. You would be the interviewee and model the behavior you are teaching. This is a simple way to not only reinforce your point, but get your audience to pay attention.

## **3. Get everyone out of their seats.**

If people are yawning and looking at the clock, they are likely not listening to you and hoping for your presentation to end. If this is the case, tell everyone to stand up. This puts everyone on high alert because now they have to perform in some way. There are a variety of things you can do with them once they are standing, and you want to make sure your plan matches the goals of your talk. For example, if you're teaching networking skills, you can ask everyone to introduce themselves to the person on their left and their right. If you are teaching stress reduction techniques, you could have everyone practice one or two stretches they could later do at their own desk. You can also put people in pairs to work together on something, or have them work in small groups while standing. Getting out of chairs helps your audience pay attention and stay engaged throughout your talk.

If you think you have a topic that can't be interactive, think again! It's time to get creative with your presentations and include your audience. Rather than stick to the boring slide presentation, try to mix it up by remembering you have an entire team of people sitting in front of you who can make your presentation even better.

Next time, we'll talk about the value of including your personal stories and experiences in everything you teach. You'll be surprised how much of an impact your personal touch can add to the stage!

## ***LESSON #5: WHAT'S TRUE FOR YOU?***

Have you ever seen a speaker who really moved you? Do you remember what he or she was talking about? My guess is, they were sharing a personal story. If you've ever attended a fundraising dinner, you likely heard a personal story about one of the people who would benefit



from your donation. Chances are, that story was delivered right from the person who experienced it. The reason for this is because stories are powerful. We are emotional beings who have the ability to empathize and internalize other people's struggles and triumphs. These stories touch us in a way that data and facts never can and never will. For this reason, making your talk personal by including your own experiences will increase the impact and overall experience for your audience. Here are a few ways to include your stories in a presentation.

### **1. Think about how this subject has touched your life.**

As a public speaking trainer, I have a lot of stories to share about my own public speaking journey. I could easily focus on the techniques and strategies to becoming an excellent speaker, but I often include my own story of being a self-professed "shy girl" who was once terrified of getting on stage. After joining Toastmasters and giving hundreds of speeches, I started to manage my fear. When I started a business in 2009, I used free workshops as my #1 form of marketing. After doing enough workshops, I started to get paid for it and became a professional speaker. If I didn't sign up for Toastmasters 10 years ago, I wouldn't be a trainer of speakers today.

I often share this story because it shows my trainees that I had to start somewhere, just like they have to. I empathize with their fear of speaking and I recognize that it's not easy. Instead of telling them that flat out, I instead tell the story about how I became a speaker and that helps them understand where I've been and how I got here. This is a good way to relate to your audience and show them what is possible.

### **2. Use a story to illustrate your point.**

If you have been in your profession for a while, you probably have lots of success stories. Use one of those stories to drive home your point. For example, if you are trying to teach your audience new sales skills, you could share a story about using one of those sales skills with a customer and how it turned out. The story acts as another way of teaching while also reinforcing what you want them to know. You can also share stories about other people, like when someone else used a sales strategy on you and how you responded.

### **3. Start with a story for impact.**

If you watch [TED talks](#), you probably already know that many speakers start with a story to bring their audience into their talk to inspire them or get them thinking right away. Storytelling is a great way to start a speech because it's personal and brings your audience into your talk faster than most other ways. Could you imagine if someone started off a speech by saying, "Today we're going to talk about how to pave a driveway?" What if, instead, they said, "My father had the most interesting job when I was growing up. He owned more trucks and machines than any of my friend's dad's and he was always traveling to new places. Some might say paving driveways and roads isn't the most fascinating work, but when I was a kid, I thought my dad was

the coolest guy in the world.” This story tells us something about the speaker while also bringing us into how he thinks. We’re instantly engaged and want to know what this talk is about. Why are we learning about his dad? Why does he have so many trucks? Where does he go with those trucks? Why is he so cool? By adding in simple stories like this one, you build a bond quickly and you give your audience a reason to keep listening.

Experiment with stories by including a new one every time you speak. You may find that you like telling some stories more than others. Create a bank of your favorites and try to tell them as often as possible. You’ll start to become known for them and you’ll get better at telling them every time. Your audience will thank you for bringing in an emotional element by being engaged in your words and giving you the attention you deserve as the speaker.

Next time, we’ll cover the importance of improvising when you’re on stage so you can react to what is needed in each moment, rather than stick to a plan that may not be working.

## ***LESSON #6: IMPROVISE. AND THEN IMPROVISE AGAIN.***

When you’re on a football team, you need to stick to the play your coach told you to run, otherwise you run the risk of confusing your team. If you’re involved in a theatrical production, you need to stick to the script so you don’t throw off your fellow actors. However, when you’re on stage working alone, the more improvising you do, the better.

One thing to know about speaking is that you can never anticipate the mood of your audience, the weather that day, current events, the temperature of the room, the lighting, the size of the space, the quality of the microphone, or the availability of technical support. Because of this, speakers must be ready to improvise at all times. You could have the best planned talk, but that doesn’t fly if your audience has been sitting at a conference for the last eight hours and they’re all tired and sore from being crammed in a chair all day. If this is the case, you’re not doing your audience any favors by ignoring this fact and having them continue to sit and listen. Chances are, they’re not listening anyway.

When you notice your audience’s needs have changed from what you planned, it’s your responsibility as the leader to switch gears. As you learned in a previous lesson, you may need to have them pair up into teams to talk about what they’re learning. Maybe you’ll have someone get on stage and you could interview them. Perhaps you’ll do a Q&A style presentation instead of a straight monologue.

Seasoned speakers are trained to read their audience and intuit what they need, without asking. Often, reading the crowd’s body language, the volume of chatter before starting, and the environmental elements like uncomfortable chairs or bad acoustics will act as clues to make a change. Start to become aware of your space, of the people around you, and where your audience was before they arrived. If your talk is at 7:30 in the morning and everyone looks like

they woke up 5 minutes ago, you want to address that by doing something energizing. Same goes for talks after lunch, when everyone may be sluggish. Ignoring your audience's needs is what creates a barrier for them to be fully engaged in your presentation. If you want to give that talk again or leave a good impression, paying attention to your audience and improvising as needed will greatly increase your chances of a positive review.

Things to pay attention to:

- Time of day
- Where your audience is coming from
- Size of the space
- Temperature of the space
- Comfort of the chairs
- Lighting
- Acoustics
- Weather
- General mood of the crowd
- Current events
- Body language
- Volume of chatter
- Energy of the room

Next time, we'll cover why less is more when you give a talk. Many speakers have a tendency to pack as much as they can into their presentations, leaving their audience's heads spinning. Avoid that using the "50% Rule."

## **LESSON #7: USE THE 50% RULE**

Do you remember the Micro Machine commercials in the 1980s? If not, they featured a voiceover by a man who could speak so fast you could barely understand what he was saying. It was catchy though, and kids (like me at the time), really liked it. The problem with this approach is that your audience misses at least 50% of what you say. We just can't process information that fast and therefore, we end up confused, falling behind, and lost. To avoid blank stares and an audience full of people scratching their heads, try the 50% Rule.

The 50% Rule is when you build your talk with everything you want to convey, and then you chop it in half, removing the 50% that isn't as important. This way, you avoid the temptation to include everything by speaking as fast as humanly possible. Instead, you take your time to explain each point. Many people can't digest more than 3-4 main points in an hour anyway, so rather than try to cram in as much as possible in a short amount of time, make less content more meaningful by focusing on each point and giving it the time it needs to sink in. The best way to do this is by following these three steps.

### **1. Share the tip**

Tell the audience exactly what they need to know. For example, “You need to send out one email newsletter to your customers each week.” This is clear advice and tells your audience what to do.

### **2. Share a story**

Illustrate that tip by telling us how and why this works. For example, “In 2013, I sent out two emails per month to my newsletter subscribers and noticed 15% of them paid for products from me. When I upped my frequency to once per week, orders shot up to 25%. I wouldn’t recommend emailing them more frequently than once a week, as that research shows us people are more apt to unsubscribe and ignore your messages.”

### **3. Share an example that relates to the audience**

Think about what might be important to them. If you are talking to a group of pet store owners, you might say, “Send out an email every week with one of the following: a pet grooming tip, a feeding tip, an obedience tip, or a video of you walking through the store showing your readers what’s on sale that week. Every 8-10 emails, slip in a special offer, or a coupon. This will keep your readers coming back because your newsletters are valuable to them.”

If you repeat this 3-step process three-four times, you will have more than enough helpful content to fill up 60 minutes. The goal is not to bombard your audience with information, it is to guide them to take action with simple steps they can take right away. Avoid losing your audience and wasting everyone’s time by keeping things simple and taking the time to explain everything you are teaching.

Next time, we’ll go over how to be funny in your presentation, even if you think you’re not a humorous person. Jokes go a long way and everyone can include them, if you know how.

## ***LESSON #8: BE FUNNY***

If you ask 10 random people if they think they are funny, chances are, 9 out of 10 will say no. For some reason, many people are either afraid to be funny or they don’t notice when others are laughing at their jokes. For this reason, the idea of injecting humor into their presentation sounds less enticing than a bowl of old sneaker soup. If you watch funny people, you’ll notice they often aren’t even telling jokes, they are just speaking in an authentic way that makes them likeable. The audience laughs because they are connecting with the person in front of them. Here are a few strategies you can try to improve your “funny” on stage.

### **1. Take joke notes**

Have you ever tried reverse engineering a joke you like? If you do, you may start to see a formula for it. Become a student of humor by searching for and watching your favorite

comedians on YouTube. Grab a pen and notice when you laugh. Rewind the clip and look for the beginning of that joke. What was the opening line? What was the build up? What was the punchline? Why was it funny? Was it surprising? Was it original? Was it relatable? Often times, the funniest jokes are the ones that are highly relatable, original to the speaker, and surprising to the audience. See for yourself!

## **2. Practice**

Have you ever thought of being a standup comedian? Does that last sentence make you want to stop reading right now? If so, good! This tip will stretch you way outside your comfort zone and give you a foundation for injecting humor into your talks. Many towns and cities have open mic nights for comedians, singers, and writers. Why not sign up for a 5-minute slot and try out a few jokes? There's no pressure; your boss won't be there and your clients won't see you. Write a few funny stories about your life. Here are some idea starters:

- A day that went horribly wrong
- A funny summer vacation story
- An awkward high school moment
- Your first kiss
- Worst job interview
- Experience buying a house/with a landlord
- Bad blind date

We all have life experiences that are highly relatable to others and still our own. Try bringing your unique story to the stage and infuse it with humor using the principles in tip #3.

## **3. Create a Rollercoaster**

Great stories can be funny if they include funny details. Telling us you went to the store to buy groceries, filled your cart, got to the checkout and realized you forgot your wallet could be a funny story or a boring story. The details are what makes it humorous and interesting. Try answering questions like these:

- Why did you go to the store that day?
- What was your burning desire at the grocery store?
- What was on your mind when you left?
- Where is the pain in your story?
- Are you a naturally forgetful person, or would your family describe you as organized?
- What happened when you were getting ready to leave?
- Why was this day so out of the ordinary for you?
- What happened at the grocery store? Any funny moments?
- How did you feel when you went to reach for your wallet?
- How did the cashier respond?

- What did you do next?

Bring your audience on a rollercoaster with you throughout the story by creating drama and intrigue. Telling them how you felt, why you were doing what you were doing, and what was going through your mind. These elements will bring your audience into the experience with you and get them excited to hear more.

Humor is as unique as a fingerprint. Rather than try to tell jokes like the greats, instead look for ways to find your own style that works for you. It may take a lot of trial and error, but your presentations will improve if you can make your audience laugh. Non-traditional jokes and untested formulas are fair game and the possibilities are endless! Have fun with humor and your audience will thank you. If you want to learn more about how to be funny, check out my interview with Cathy McNally, a presentation coach and comedian on my podcast. She shares tips for being funny and teaches a few improv games to try at home. [Episode 13 here.](#)

Next time, we'll talk about one of the most useful, yet underutilized tools in the world of public speaking. It's likely one you've overlooked for years.

## ***LESSON #9: LEARN THE SURPRISING VALUE OF WORKSHEETS***

One of my favorite ways to increase participation and interest in my talks is including worksheets. My worksheets are always basic and make the audience feel super smart. You want to get your audience involved during your talk for three reasons:

1. It keeps them engaged
2. It increases the chances of them absorbing what you're saying
3. It increases the chances of them taking action when they leave because they've already built their plan

Worksheets that remind your audience of coloring books when they were a kid creates interest instead of dread. Why put them through something boring and confusing when you can make it fun and easy? Here are a few tips for creating useful worksheets that your audience actually wants to use.

### **1. Ask thoughtful questions to get them thinking about their own life**

Asking a question like, "How is this true for you?" helps them put themselves into your talk and creates a frame of reference for them. Share a few examples of your own before you ask them to write. For example, if you were talking about leadership strategies and you were specifically focused on inclusion, you could tell a few stories about a time when someone was excluded and a time someone was included. Then, you would ask your audience to fill in the answer to question #1: "How is this true for you?" This is a great way to start a conversation because

you've given everyone a chance to think about it and formulate a personal experience they can share. Everyone has it written in front of them and will be much more likely to raise their hand after being given a chance to reflect.

## **2. Use fun shapes**

Instead of asking your audience to fill in their answers or ideas on a blank line, instead, create a large shape they can fill in. For example, I do an exercise called "Star Power" where I ask the audience to write down what they excel at. Instead of writing it in list format, they fill in a large blank star. It is more fun to look at and gives them freedom to write big or small and in whatever way they'd like. You can also use circles, triangles, outlines of cars, trees, cats, hamburgers, anything! Make it visually interesting and easy to approach and your audience will be much more excited to participate.

## **3. Do "fill in the blank" exercises**

Write entire sentences on your worksheet, but leave the keyword out. This means when you arrive at that part of the worksheet, you can prompt your audience to pay attention to that line of text. When you say that sentence, they have to listen (and write in) the keyword. This means they will be on the edge of their seat waiting for the keywords. It's a fun way to get them to tune into your key takeaways and make them feel like they are part of the presentation. You can also randomly pick someone you see writing to recite the sentence back to the group. This increases the likelihood of everyone hearing it and writing it down, if they didn't already.

## **4. Give them a chance to practice**

Once you are done with your talk, create an opportunity for your audience to try what they just learned. Create a short exercise they can fill in and then have them work in partners or small groups to discuss what they wrote. This is another amazing way to help them retain what they heard because they are experiencing your content right away. For example, if you are teaching leadership principles, you can ask everyone to choose their favorite one from your talk and create a plan to test it out. Then have them talk to the person sitting next to them about their plan and get feedback.

Worksheets are amazing and so underutilized compared to PowerPoint. Rather than bore your audience with another long slideshow, consider ditching that element of the presentation in favor of the interactive worksheet.

In our final lesson, we're going to talk about how important it is to find your personal presentation style. Last but definitely not least, this element of your talk is critical for creating a lasting connection between you and the people in your audience.

## **LESSON #10: FIND YOUR OWN STYLE**

When I started speaking 10 years ago, I thought I needed to move around the stage like a dramatic actor in a Shakespeare play. I worried I wasn't gregarious and animated enough. I wondered if I was boring because I didn't like to swing my arms as I talked and walked around the room. My fear was that I wasn't the person I imagined a good speaker should be. As I started to observe other speakers, I realized one critical thing: All speakers are different! The best speakers are the ones who recognize their talents, their style, and know what feels best for them. Why this is important is because your audience can tell when you are acting. Unless you're one of the best actors out there, your talk will come off as inauthentic and boring because your audience won't get a sense for who *you* are. Rather than have a missed opportunity to build a real connection with the people who came to see you speak, try the following strategies for finding your true presentation style.

### **1. Ask 30 people to describe you in three words**

Do you ever wonder how the world sees you? You are probably already aware of what you think you're good at, but what about everyone else? A great way to find out is by emailing 30 friends, co-workers, past bosses, teammates, and anyone else who knows you pretty well. Ask them one question: *If you could describe me in three words, which three words would you pick?* Create a spreadsheet and keep track of all the words. Put tick marks next to the words that keep showing up and when you receive all your feedback, tally your answers. You'll likely have a few standouts in the group. Those are the attributes that are strongest in you. Showcase them by using them as building blocks for your talk. When I did this exercise, the three words I heard most often were creative, thoughtful, and motivated. It made me ask myself, "How can I make this talk more creative?" Just thinking about creativity got me excited and made me want to build fun worksheets and incorporate costumes and props. By adding elements of your personality into your talk, you are showcasing who you truly are and giving your audience a glimpse into your mind, your perspective, and your heart.

### **2. Talk about what you like to talk about**

If you want your presentation to shine, you need to talk about it in a way that gets you excited. As we talked about in lesson #1, if you pick topics and stories that exhibit your passion, you will create an exciting and engaging experience for your audience. If you present those topics and stories using your unique style, you are giving an even more compelling presentation because it is showcasing YOU. This will be a process of trial and error and you will eventually create an arsenal of favorite, go-to stories you can use over and over again for your audiences. These stories will also become part of your personal brand and reputation as a speaker!

### **3. Showcase your gifts**



What we've been talking about here over the last ten lessons is creating presentations that are memorable, engaging, moving, and get your audience to do something with your words. If you follow the tips offered and continue practicing and tweaking your work, you will arrive at a place that sounds like you and gives your audience the gift of your talents. Don't be afraid to try new things, experiment with different approaches, and integrate new styles into your talks. Public speaking is a unique performance for each person and it doesn't need to be hard. Make it an adventure and your audience will thank you. Here is a brief overview of everything we've covered in this 10-day course:

**Lesson #1: Talk about what gets you excited**

If you want your audience to care, you have to care first!

**Lesson #2: Who is sitting in your audience?**

Learn as much as you can about who is sitting in front of you and craft something that appeals to their challenges, interests, fears, and goals.

**Lesson #3: Ditch PowerPoint**

Try using props and different visuals that surprise and engage your audience in new ways. Appeal to the child in all of us!

**Lesson #4: Make it interactive**

Getting your audience involved exponentially increases their interest and ability to retain your advice and ideas. Don't forget they're people too!

**Lesson #5: What's true for you?**

Including personal stories and experiences creates a lasting connection with your audience.

**Lesson #6: Improvise. And then improvise again.**

Knowing how to switch up your presentation to meet the needs of the space, the audience, and the time allotment will give you better results every time.

**Lesson #7: Use the 50% rule**

Rather than overcrowd your talk with too much information, only use 50% of what you need and allow time for improvising, Q&A and further engagement.

**Lesson #8: Be funny**

Adding humor to your talk in a way that works for your personality is a great way to increase likeability and interest.

**Lesson #9: Learn the surprising value of worksheets**

This old fashioned tool is amazingly helpful if you make it fun and create interesting ways for your audience to engage with it.

## Lesson #10: Find your own style

Bringing your personality and unique gifts to the table will enhance your presentation and give your audience a glimpse into who you really are.

Enjoy your public speaking journey and know that every speech you give is an opportunity to express yourself, discover yourself, and surprise yourself. You never know what you might find.

If you identify as a woman and you're over 18 years old, check out a Speaker Sisterhood club to keep improving your public speaking skills. Clubs are held in communities and online. Find us at [www.speakersisterhood.com](http://www.speakersisterhood.com).

To the journey,

Angela

