

Introduction

Some say the secret to being a good presenter is to visualize the audience naked. I say if you really want to be a great speaker, it's the speaker who must strip for the audience.

It's no wonder so many of us are terrified to speak in front of a group. Presenting speaks to our greatest insecurity—what if people don't accept us as we are?

Great speakers and presenters are not afraid to bare their souls to audiences. They strip away their masks and illusions allowing audiences and prospects to see them for who they are. Audiences walk away not only with increased knowledge but with some insight into the presenter as a person.

Whether our goal is to sell, educate, or inform, every speech or presentation has a goal, and the key to reaching that goal is generating trust. In order to trust us, people must know us, like us, and believe we are credible. We have to be authentic.

When we are authentic, we stand in our power. We become the full expression of all we are. We become what I call Powerhouse Presenters. And that is my goal for you: to become a Powerhouse Presenter.

Every professional knows that strong communications skills are critical for their success, but most businesspeople communicate at half-power or less. They may know their stuff, look good, and even make great presentations, but they rarely take the next step: influencing, motivating, and inspiring their audiences.

Powerhouse Presenters do take that step, because they realize the importance of *connection*. They understand that the power to influence,

motivate, and inspire entails not simply exchanging information, but actively creating a connection between sender and receiver.

Powerhouse Presenters are clear about who they are and what they stand for, and they boldly communicate this information through their words and actions. By conveying authenticity, authority, vision, conviction, competency, consistency, and caring, they earn trust.

When you become a more confident, competent, and convicted speaker, you can expect to:

- Successfully sell your ideas, products, services, and self;
- Motivate and lead workers;
- Build consensus and encourage teamwork;
- Facilitate problem solving, and
- Build strong relationships with key constituents.

What We'll Cover

I want to help you become a stronger communicator by becoming a more powerful presenter. In the pages that follow, I use three strategies to do so.

Number one, I want to work with you to totally reframe the way you currently think about presentations.

Number two, I hope to show you how to present to people in a way that ensures buy-in throughout your presentation.

Number three, I want to increase your comfort zone with presenting and speaking in public.

We'll begin with the four homework assignments that you must complete before beginning any proposal. Then we'll examine how to put—and hold—presentations together. We'll explore several types of proposals or speeches, including sales presentations, speeches to inform or educate, consulting presentations, and what I call “Snap” presentations for situations in which we are required to think fast on our feet. I will also share some tips for how to look strong when presenting to top management.

Even the strongest presentation can fall apart during the question and answer period. We'll review strategies for any potential challenges during this period.

From here, we'll move into one of my favorite sections: how to present. We'll spend some time on how to make fabulous first impressions. We'll cover visual cues, including dress, stance, eye contact, gestures, and movement. Then we'll move to vocal cues and I will share some common pitfalls I encounter when coaching clients. We'll conclude this section with a discussion of how to manage nerves when you speak, including the proper use of notes and teleprompters.

Powerhouse Presenters earn their audience's attention. I'll review five presentation strategies that will allow you to get audiences to listen and take note. As a bonus, I will cover how to be brief and to the point for those of us who may be a little long-winded. I'll also discuss some specific challenges women may face when presenting. Then I will conclude by reviewing the strongest tool in the Powerhouse Presenting toolbox, authenticity.

Finally, in the resource section at the end of the book, you'll find several additional tools for presenting, including instructions for audio and teleconferencing and Webcasts.

Power Surges

When I opened my training business in 1999, I hired an expert in adult learning. He told me adults put information into one of three buckets:

1. Facts they know, but would like to remember
2. Concepts they may be a little unsure of and need to noodle a bit
3. The great "aha!"

My hope is that you'll experience an aha or two as you read this book. I sure did in writing it. To ensure you don't miss these flashes of insight, I have summarized them at the end of each chapter. I call these summaries "Power Surges." I hope you'll add your own insights to these summaries.