



COACHES MAKE GREAT PUBLIC SPEAKERS

By Chris Witt, www.wittcom.com

You may be inexperienced as a speaker. You may even be as afraid of giving speeches as everyone else. (People rank the fear of public speaking, time and again, as their greatest fear.)

But if you're a good coach—and *you are a good coach, aren't you?*—you have much of what it takes to be a good speaker.

Here are three qualities or skills of a good coach that can make you an even better speaker:

1. **Your Ability to Connect**

Call it what you will—empathy, rapport, understanding—as a coach you're able to connect with other people quickly and authentically. People know that you care and, in turn, they trust you. Use that skill as a speaker to build rapport with an audience. Don't try to connect with everyone all at once. Connect, instead, with one person at a time. Then shift your attention to someone else in the audience.

2. **Your Ability to Listen**

Coaches listen. That's much of what they do, right? Well, speakers listen too. At least the good ones do. Before the event, as you're preparing your presentation, speak to the meeting planner. Ask lots of questions. And then listen. Ask more questions and listen again. Contact people who will be attending, and ask them questions and listen to them. On the day of the event, talk to people as they gather. And—you guessed it—ask them questions and listen. As you're speaking, listen to people's non-verbal signals. Listen as they ask questions or share their own insights.

3. **Your Ability to Problem Solve**

As a coach you help people solve problems and achieve goals, don't you? That's what speakers do. Your speech is an opportunity not to brag about yourself and your knowledge, but to help people. No matter what you're talking about, your organizing question should always be: How can I use what I know to help my audience solve a problem or achieve a goal that's important to them?

You may need to get some formal training or help to master the basics of public speaking, but you already have developed personal qualities and skills that you can use to become a truly effective speaker.

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