

Public Speaking: Finding Your Voice

by Christine S. McMahon, Deborah S. Davis

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Summary:

Public Speaking: Finding Your Voice by Christine S. McMahon and Deborah S. Davis is a comprehensive guide to public speaking. The book is divided into three parts: Part One covers the basics of public speaking, Part Two focuses on the development of a speech, and Part Three provides guidance on delivering a speech.

Part One begins with an introduction to public speaking, discussing the importance of public speaking and the different types of speeches. It then covers the basics of speech preparation, including researching the topic, organizing the speech, and writing the speech. It also provides advice on how to use visual aids and how to practice the speech.

Part Two focuses on the development of a speech. It covers the different types of speeches, such as informative, persuasive, and special occasion speeches. It also provides advice on how to choose a topic, how to develop an effective introduction and conclusion, and how to use evidence and language to support the speech.

Part Three provides guidance on delivering a speech. It covers the importance of body language, vocal delivery, and eye contact. It also provides advice on how to handle nerves and how to use humor effectively. Finally, it provides tips on how to handle questions from the audience.

Public Speaking: Finding Your Voice is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to improve their public speaking skills. It provides a comprehensive overview of the basics of public speaking, as well as detailed advice on how to develop and deliver a speech. It is an essential guide for anyone looking to become a confident and effective public speaker.

Main ideas:

#1. *Understand Your Audience: It is important to understand the needs and interests of your audience before you begin to craft your speech. Knowing who your audience is and what they expect from you will help you to create a speech that resonates with them.*

Understanding your audience is essential to crafting a successful speech. Before you begin, take the time to research who your audience is and what they expect from you. Consider their age, gender, education level, and any other relevant factors. Knowing this information will help you to tailor your speech to their needs and interests.

You should also consider the purpose of your speech. Are you trying to inform, persuade, or entertain your audience? Knowing the purpose of your speech will help you to create a message that resonates with your audience. You can also use this information to determine the tone and language you should use in your speech.

Finally, consider the context of your speech. Is it a formal or informal setting? Are you speaking to a large or small group? Knowing the context of your speech will help you to adjust your delivery and content accordingly.

By taking the time to understand your audience, you can create a speech that resonates with them and meets their expectations.

#2. *Choose an Appropriate Topic: Selecting a topic that is relevant to your audience and that you are passionate about will help you to create a speech that is engaging and informative.*

Choosing an appropriate topic for your speech is an important step in the public speaking process. It is important to select a topic that is relevant to your audience and that you are passionate about. This will help you to create a speech that is engaging and informative. When selecting a topic, consider the interests of your audience and the purpose of your speech. You should also consider the amount of time you have to prepare and the resources available to you. Additionally, it is important to select a topic that you are knowledgeable about and that you can speak about with enthusiasm.

Once you have selected a topic, it is important to research it thoroughly. This will help you to gain a better understanding of the topic and to develop a more comprehensive speech. Researching your topic will also help you to identify any potential issues or questions that your audience may have. Additionally, it will help you to identify any potential sources of information that you can use to support your speech.

Finally, it is important to practice your speech before delivering it. This will help you to become more comfortable with the material and to ensure that you are delivering your speech in a clear and concise manner. Practicing your speech will also help you to identify any areas that need improvement and to make any necessary adjustments.

#3. *Research Your Topic: Researching your topic thoroughly will help you to create a speech that is well-informed and accurate.*

Researching your topic thoroughly is essential for creating an effective speech. It will help you to gain a better understanding of the subject matter, as well as provide you with the necessary information to support your points. When researching, it is important to look for reliable sources of information, such as books, articles, and websites. Additionally, it is important to consider the audience you are speaking to and tailor your research to their needs. For example, if you are speaking to a group of medical professionals, you may want to focus on research from medical journals or other medical sources. Once you have gathered the necessary information, it is important to organize it in a way that is easy to understand and follow. This will help you to create a speech that is well-informed and accurate.

#4. *Develop an Outline: Creating an outline of your speech will help you to organize your thoughts and ensure that your speech flows logically.*

Creating an outline for your speech is an important step in the public speaking process. It will help you to organize your thoughts and ensure that your speech flows logically. An effective outline should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.

The introduction should capture the audience's attention and provide an overview of the topic. It should also include a thesis statement that outlines the main points of the speech.

The body of the speech should include the main points of the speech. Each point should be supported with evidence and examples. It is important to provide transitions between each point to ensure that the speech flows logically.

The conclusion should summarize the main points of the speech and provide a call to action. It should also leave the audience with something to think about.

Creating an outline for your speech will help you to organize your thoughts and ensure that your speech flows logically. It will also help you to stay on track and ensure that you cover all of the points that you want to make.

#5. *Practice Your Speech: Practicing your speech will help you to become more comfortable with the material and to deliver it with confidence.*

Practicing your speech is an important step in becoming a confident public speaker. It will help you to become familiar with the material and to be able to deliver it with ease. When practicing your speech, it is important to focus on the content, the structure, and the delivery.

When focusing on the content, it is important to make sure that you understand the material and that you are able to explain it in a clear and concise manner. You should also practice using the correct terminology and language to ensure that your audience understands the message you are trying to convey.

When focusing on the structure, it is important to practice the flow of your speech. This includes the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. You should also practice the transitions between each section to ensure that your speech is cohesive and easy to follow.

Finally, when focusing on the delivery, it is important to practice the tone and volume of your voice. You should also practice the gestures and facial expressions that you will use to emphasize certain points. Practicing your speech will help you to become more comfortable with the material and to deliver it with confidence.

#6. Use Visual Aids: Using visual aids such as slides, videos, or props can help to engage your audience and make your speech more memorable.

Using visual aids can be an effective way to make your speech more engaging and memorable. Visual aids can help to illustrate your points and make them easier to understand. For example, if you are discussing a complex concept, you can use a diagram or chart to help explain it. If you are discussing a historical event, you can use a timeline or map to help your audience visualize it. Visual aids can also help to keep your audience engaged and interested in your speech.

When using visual aids, it is important to make sure that they are relevant to your topic and that they are easy to understand. You should also make sure that your visual aids are visible to your audience and that they are easy to follow. Additionally, you should practice using your visual aids before your speech so that you are comfortable with them and can use them effectively.

Using visual aids can be a great way to make your speech more engaging and memorable. By using relevant and easy-to-understand visual aids, you can help your audience to better understand and remember your points.

#7. Use Appropriate Language: Using language that is appropriate for your audience will help to ensure that your message is understood and that your speech is well-received.

Using language that is appropriate for your audience is essential for effective public speaking. It is important to consider the age, background, and interests of your audience when selecting the language you use. For example, if you are speaking to a group of teenagers, you may want to use more informal language than if you were speaking to a group of business professionals. Additionally, using language that is appropriate for the occasion is important. For example, if you are giving a speech at a funeral, you may want to use more somber language than if you were giving a speech at a wedding.

Using language that is appropriate for your audience will help to ensure that your message is understood and that your speech is well-received. It is important to be mindful of the language you use and to tailor it to the audience you are speaking to. Doing so will help to ensure that your speech is effective and that your audience is engaged.

#8. Speak with Confidence: Speaking with confidence will help to engage your audience and make them more receptive to your message.

Speaking with confidence is an important part of public speaking. When you speak with confidence, you demonstrate to your audience that you are knowledgeable and passionate about your topic. This helps to engage your audience and make them more receptive to your message. Confidence also helps to build trust between you and your audience, which can help to ensure that your message is heard and understood.

Confidence can be developed through practice and preparation. Before speaking, it is important to become familiar with

your topic and to practice your presentation. This will help to ensure that you are comfortable and confident when speaking. Additionally, it is important to remember to take deep breaths and to speak slowly and clearly. This will help to project your voice and ensure that your message is heard.

Speaking with confidence is an important part of public speaking. It helps to engage your audience and make them more receptive to your message. With practice and preparation, you can develop the confidence to speak with clarity and conviction.

#9. *Use Humor: Incorporating humor into your speech can help to engage your audience and make your speech more enjoyable.*

Humor can be a great way to make your speech more enjoyable and engaging for your audience. It can help to break the ice and make your audience more receptive to your message. Humor can also help to illustrate a point or make a complex idea easier to understand.

When using humor in your speech, it is important to be mindful of your audience. Make sure that the jokes you use are appropriate for the occasion and that they don't offend anyone. It is also important to be aware of the timing of your jokes. If you use too many jokes, your audience may become bored or distracted.

Finally, don't be afraid to have fun with your speech. Humor can be a great way to make your speech more memorable and enjoyable for your audience. So don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and make your speech a little bit more lighthearted.

#10. *Be Prepared for Questions: Being prepared to answer questions from your audience will help to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise.*

Being prepared to answer questions from your audience is an important part of public speaking. It shows that you have a thorough understanding of the topic and that you are confident in your ability to explain it. It also helps to build trust with your audience, as they can see that you are knowledgeable and prepared. To be prepared for questions, you should have a good understanding of the material you are presenting, and practice answering potential questions. You should also be familiar with the audience and their interests, so that you can tailor your answers to their needs. Additionally, it is important to be open to questions and to be willing to answer them honestly and thoroughly. By being prepared for questions, you can show your audience that you are knowledgeable and confident in your ability to explain the material.

#11. *Use Vocal Variety: Varying your vocal tone and volume will help to keep your audience engaged and make your speech more interesting.*

Using vocal variety is an important part of public speaking. Varying your vocal tone and volume can help to keep your audience engaged and make your speech more interesting. It can also help to emphasize certain points and add emphasis to your words. For example, you can use a louder, more emphatic tone when making a point, or a softer, more gentle tone when introducing a new idea. You can also vary the speed of your speech, using a slower pace to emphasize a point and a faster pace to move the speech along.

Using vocal variety can also help to convey emotion and create a connection with your audience. For example, you can use a softer, more gentle tone when expressing sympathy or a louder, more emphatic tone when expressing anger. You can also use pauses to emphasize a point or to give your audience time to think about what you've said.

Using vocal variety is an important part of public speaking and can help to make your speech more engaging and interesting. It can also help to emphasize certain points and create a connection with your audience. By varying your vocal tone and volume, you can make your speech more dynamic and engaging.

#12. Use Gestures: Using gestures while speaking can help to emphasize your points and make your speech more engaging.

Gestures can be a powerful tool when used correctly in public speaking. They can help to emphasize your points and make your speech more engaging. Gestures can also help to add clarity to your message and help to keep your audience focused. When used properly, gestures can help to create a more dynamic and interesting presentation.

When using gestures, it is important to be aware of your body language. Make sure that your gestures are natural and not forced. Avoid using too many gestures, as this can be distracting. Instead, focus on using gestures that are meaningful and that help to emphasize your points.

It is also important to be aware of the context of your speech. Different gestures may be appropriate in different situations. For example, a gesture that is appropriate in a casual setting may not be appropriate in a more formal setting. Be sure to consider the context of your speech when deciding which gestures to use.

Using gestures while speaking can be a great way to make your speech more engaging and memorable. Be sure to use gestures that are natural and appropriate for the context of your speech. With practice, you can become more comfortable with using gestures and they can become an important part of your public speaking toolkit.

#13. Make Eye Contact: Making eye contact with your audience will help to create a connection and make your speech more personal.

Making eye contact with your audience is an important part of public speaking. It helps to create a connection between you and your audience, and makes your speech more personal. When you make eye contact, you are showing your audience that you are engaged in the conversation and that you are interested in what they have to say. It also helps to build trust and credibility, as it shows that you are confident in what you are saying. Additionally, it can help to keep your audience engaged and attentive, as they will be more likely to pay attention to what you are saying if they feel like you are looking directly at them.

When making eye contact, it is important to remember to look at different people in the audience. This will help to ensure that everyone feels included and that you are not just focusing on one person. Additionally, it is important to remember to look away occasionally, as this will help to keep your audience engaged and prevent them from feeling overwhelmed. Finally, it is important to remember to smile when making eye contact, as this will help to create a more positive atmosphere and make your speech more enjoyable for everyone.

#14. Speak Clearly: Speaking clearly and at a moderate pace will help to ensure that your audience understands your message.

Speaking clearly is an important part of effective public speaking. When you speak clearly, you ensure that your audience can understand your message. This means speaking at a moderate pace and enunciating your words. It also means using language that is appropriate for your audience and avoiding jargon or slang. Additionally, it is important to use pauses and inflection to emphasize key points and to keep your audience engaged.

Speaking clearly also helps to build credibility with your audience. When you speak clearly and confidently, your audience will be more likely to trust your message and take it seriously. This is especially important when you are presenting complex information or making a persuasive argument.

Finally, speaking clearly can help to reduce stress and anxiety. When you are confident in your ability to communicate your message, you will be more relaxed and comfortable in front of your audience. This will help you to deliver your speech with more confidence and poise.

#15. Use Pauses: Using pauses strategically can help to emphasize important points and keep your audience

engaged.

Using pauses strategically can help to emphasize important points and keep your audience engaged. Pauses can be used to draw attention to a particular point, to give the audience time to think about what has been said, or to create suspense. Pauses can also be used to signal a transition between topics or to give the speaker time to collect their thoughts.

When used effectively, pauses can help to create a more dynamic and engaging presentation. Pauses can be used to emphasize a point, to give the audience time to reflect, or to create suspense. Pauses can also be used to signal a transition between topics or to give the speaker time to collect their thoughts. Additionally, pauses can be used to create a sense of anticipation or to give the audience time to process the information that has been presented.

When using pauses, it is important to be mindful of the length of the pause. Too long of a pause can be awkward and can disrupt the flow of the presentation. It is also important to be aware of the audience's reaction to the pause. If the audience is not responding positively, it may be best to move on to the next point.

Using pauses strategically can be a powerful tool for public speakers. Pauses can help to emphasize important points, create suspense, and keep the audience engaged. When used effectively, pauses can help to create a more dynamic and engaging presentation.

#16. Use Repetition: Repeating key points throughout your speech can help to ensure that your audience remembers them.

Using repetition in your speech can be a powerful tool to help your audience remember your key points. By repeating your main ideas, you can emphasize their importance and ensure that your audience remembers them. For example, if you are giving a speech about the importance of recycling, you could repeat the phrase "reduce, reuse, recycle" throughout your speech to emphasize the three key steps to reducing waste.

You can also use repetition to create a sense of rhythm and flow in your speech. By repeating certain words or phrases, you can create a cadence that will help your audience stay engaged and focused on your message. For example, if you are giving a speech about the importance of education, you could repeat the phrase "education is the key" throughout your speech to emphasize the importance of education.

Repetition can also be used to create a sense of urgency or importance. By repeating certain words or phrases, you can emphasize the importance of your message and encourage your audience to take action. For example, if you are giving a speech about the importance of voting, you could repeat the phrase "every vote counts" throughout your speech to emphasize the importance of each individual vote.

Using repetition in your speech can be a powerful tool to help your audience remember your key points. By repeating your main ideas, you can emphasize their importance and ensure that your audience remembers them. Repetition can also be used to create a sense of rhythm and flow, as well as a sense of urgency and importance. By repeating certain words or phrases, you can emphasize the importance of your message and encourage your audience to take action.

#17. Use Stories: Incorporating stories into your speech can help to make it more engaging and memorable.

Stories can be a powerful tool for public speakers. They can help to illustrate a point, provide a memorable example, and make a speech more engaging. Stories can also help to create an emotional connection with the audience, as they can evoke feelings of empathy and understanding.

When using stories in a speech, it is important to choose stories that are relevant to the topic and that will resonate with the audience. It is also important to make sure that the story is told in a way that is clear and concise. The story should be told in a way that is easy to follow and that will keep the audience engaged.

When telling a story, it is important to use vivid language and to provide enough detail to make the story come alive. It is also important to use body language and facial expressions to help bring the story to life. Finally, it is important to make sure that the story is told in a way that is appropriate for the audience.

Using stories in a speech can be a great way to make a speech more engaging and memorable. By choosing stories that are relevant to the topic and that will resonate with the audience, and by telling the story in a way that is clear and concise, speakers can create an emotional connection with their audience and make their speech more effective.

#18. Use Quotations: Using quotations from experts or other sources can help to add credibility to your speech.

"Quotations can be used to add authority to your speech. When you use a quotation, you are essentially saying, 'This is what an expert thinks about this topic.' Quotations can also be used to add humor, to illustrate a point, or to provide a memorable phrase." (McMahon & Davis, 2019).

When using quotations, it is important to make sure that you are citing the source correctly. This means that you should include the author's name, the year of publication, and the page number (if applicable). Additionally, you should make sure that the quotation is relevant to your topic and that it is not taken out of context.

#19. Use Transitions: Using transitions between topics can help to keep your speech organized and flowing.

Transitions are important when giving a speech because they help to keep the audience focused and engaged. They can also help to make the speech more organized and easier to follow. Transitions can be used to move from one topic to another, to introduce a new idea, or to emphasize a point. For example, if you are discussing the importance of education, you could transition to a discussion of the benefits of a college degree by saying, "Now that we've discussed the importance of education, let's look at the advantages of a college degree."

Transitions can also be used to emphasize a point or to draw attention to a particular idea. For example, if you are discussing the importance of volunteer work, you could transition to a discussion of the rewards of volunteering by saying, "Volunteering is not only important, it can also be incredibly rewarding."

Transitions can also be used to introduce a new idea or to move from one point to another. For example, if you are discussing the importance of exercise, you could transition to a discussion of the benefits of a healthy diet by saying, "Now that we've discussed the importance of exercise, let's look at the benefits of a healthy diet."

Using transitions between topics can help to keep your speech organized and flowing. They can also help to emphasize points and draw attention to particular ideas. By using transitions, you can ensure that your speech is clear and easy to follow.

#20. End with a Call to Action: Ending your speech with a call to action can help to motivate your audience to take action.

The idea of ending your speech with a call to action is an important one. A call to action can help to motivate your audience to take action and make a difference. It can also help to reinforce the message of your speech and ensure that your audience remembers the key points.

When crafting your call to action, make sure that it is specific and achievable. Ask your audience to do something that is within their power to do, and that will help to make a difference. For example, you could ask them to sign a petition, volunteer for a cause, or donate to a charity.

By ending your speech with a call to action, you can help to ensure that your audience takes away something

meaningful from your speech. So, take the time to craft a powerful call to action that will motivate your audience to take action and make a difference.