



THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS OF

# GREAT COMMUNICATORS

Reference Manual



**Peter Thomson**

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# **IMPORTANT**

To begin — Please save this reference manual to your desktop or in another location.

How can you get the most out of this writeable reference manual? Research has shown that the more ways you interact with learning material, the deeper your learning will be. Nightingale-Conant has created a cutting-edge learning system that involves listening to the audio, reading the ideas in the manual, and writing your ideas and thoughts down. In fact, this manual is designed so that you can write your notes right inside this document.

For each session, we recommend the following:

- ✓ Preview the section of the workbook that corresponds with the audio session, paying particular attention to the exercises.
- ✓ Listen to the audio session at least once.
- ✓ Read the text of the workbook.

In addition to the exercises and questions, we've created an "i-journal" to make this an even more interactive experience for you. At the end of this guide, you can write down any additional thoughts, ideas, or insights to further personalize the material. Remember, the more you apply this information, the more you'll get out of it.

At the end of this manual we have listed several other programs that you might find helpful.

## ☑ Introduction

Everyone is in the persuasion business. Sometimes that persuasion is directed to other people. Sometimes it is inwardly directed to your self-talk. Persuasion can occur in a simple conversation with one or a few people, or it can be while speaking to an audience of 500 or more people, as part of your professional world or within your personal activities. Persuasion is part of everyday reality and greatly determines the quality of your life and the success you achieve.

If you use persuasion to unfairly influence another person's thought process, that could be called manipulation. When you seek a win/win situation, then persuasion is used as motivation. Be conscious of your intention as you explore this topic.

The ideas, methods, and techniques presented in this booklet will benefit you in the following ways:

- You will have better conversations.
- You will be more persuasive.
- You will have better business and personal relationships.
- You will handle difficult communication with ease.
- You will have more success, however you define it.
- You will have a great deal of fun listening to others and watching their body language.

Incorporate one idea or a few ideas into your life at a time. When you are ready, come back for more.

## ☑ Active Listening

Listen actively when there is high emotion or the possibility of misunderstanding, when the person is important to you, or when you need the information they have. The better you listen and respond to others, the better they will listen and respond to you. The more attention you pay when someone else is talking, the more attention they will pay when you are talking. Here are ways to listen actively.

**1** Think of listening based on the ratio of having two ears and one mouth. Use them in that ratio. Listen twice as much as you speak.

**2** Maintain eye contact. It shows others that you are paying attention.

**3** Make notes. This will reinforce your memory. It is advisable to ask permission first in some situations. That permission is seldom refused. If you wish to take a tape recording, it is vital to ask permission.

**4** Allow people to finish their own sentences no matter how enthusiastically you want to jump into the conversation. Doing so will indicate respect for what the person is saying.

**5** Get all the information that is available within a conversation so you will not jump to any false conclusions. Wait for the end of the sentence or end of the conversation to be sure this conversation is unique from any other that may sound similar to you.

**6** Respond so the other person knows you are listening. Your response may be “Yes” or “I see” or merely nodding your head. Any of these will do.

**7** Be accepting rather than judgmental so you can truly hear the message being given. Different accents, catch phrases, speeds of speech, and cultural generalizations can get in the way of hearing the actual message.

**8** Ask questions when you do not understand something that was said. This goes a long way to building strong communication.

**9** Ask core questions. That is typically a series of “why” questions that go deeper into a particular subject to gain the greatest understanding of a situation. Start with broad information and continue seeking more specific responses.

**10** Pause before replying. Pausing will add power to what you say. It indicates you are giving a considered response, that you thought about it, that it is not just some answer you offer every time this question comes up.

**11** Use the Rapid Repeat Method to improve your listening skills and concentration abilities. Do this by simply repeating, silently in your mind, what is being said a fraction of a second later. This holds your concentration and improves your recall of what was said.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**



## ☑ Subconscious Encoding

Consider that as humans we have two minds: the conscious and the subconscious. The conscious mind is the judge of the information that comes through the senses, dealing with one item at a time. The subconscious mind stores memories and does not judge information at all. It simply stores it. When a person is asked a question they respond, whether the response is verbalized or not.

**12** Be enthusiastic! Smile and use pattern interrupting words such as “sizzling,” “great,” and “awesome!” This will encourage others to be enthusiastic!

**13** Phrase your questions so that “Yes” answers or positive mode answers are given. This will keep the other person in your conversation in a positive mode because the subconscious has accepted the “Yes” as the response.

**14** Insert “Yes Tags” into your questions. “Yes Tags” are phrases like “Isn’t it,” “Couldn’t you,” “Aren’t they,” “Won’t you.” They have more impact when they are placed at the end of a question, although they can be at the start, middle, or end. An example would be, “You will be able to stay to finish that report, won’t you?”

**15** Be aware of how often you use “Yes Tags.” They can begin to sound mechanical and contrived when used too frequently.

**16** Use positive self-talk. Program yourself by saying what TO DO rather than what NOT TO DO.

**17** Consider what mode your questions create. The way you ask a question sets a tone in the conversation. When asking someone at a customer service desk if they deal with complaints, you establish the mode of “complaint.” Asking that same person if they deal with “helping” you, you have created a mode of “helping.” Think “solution” rather than “problem” in your communication.

**18** Practice using the following methods to improve the retention of whoever is in communication with you:

**First** — Make an effort to be first or last when giving a presentation to a group.

**Last** — First and last items in any situation are the most likely to be remembered.

**Unusual items** — Use as many creative ideas as possible to make your presentation unusual and therefore more memorable.

**Linking** — Connect information with something the other person already knows.

**Repetition** — Things that are repeated again and again tend to stick in your mind. Do this by summarizing regularly throughout a presentation and then again at the end.

**Enthusiasm** — You and your listeners remember information when you are enthusiastic about it.

**19** Learn to use the YARD Technique as a process to reach the result you want. YARD stands for:

**Y Yes** — an agreement to take action.

**A Action** — the action has taken place.

**R Result** — a result has happened.

**D Delighted** — the other party is delighted!

This method requires asking a question that could only be asked after those situations have come to pass. You must imagine a situation where you want to obtain agreement. Then visualize the fact that the action has taken place. You will then have a question to ask that triggers this process.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

## ☑ Reaching Home Base

Within any particular native language, each person has their own home base of language, according to the ideas put forth by the two founding scientists of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP). The home bases are built on the five senses of visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (feeling/action/touch), olfactory (smelling), and gustatory (tasting). The first three are the main ones.

**20** Listen carefully to the kinds of words spoken by others. Words like “see,” “look,” and “watch” are strong indicators their home base is likely visual. Words such as “hear,” “listen,” and “rings a bell” means auditory is probably the home base. A kinesthetic home base is indicated by words like “touch,” “feel,” and “explore.” Once you are aware of the home base, your communication will be more effective when you match with the same home base.

**21** Be aware of the pace at which people are speaking. That is another indicator of language home base. Visual people tend to speak quickly. Kinesthetic people often speak more slowly than visual people. Auditory people often speak more slowly than kinesthetic people.

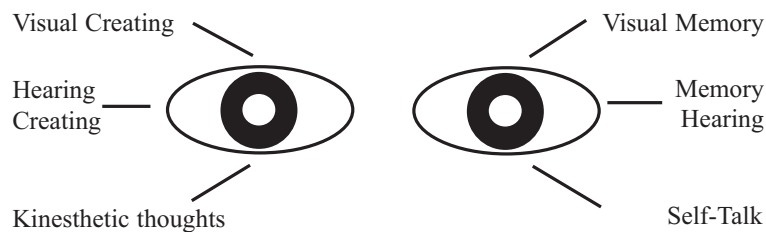
**22** Notice people’s body shapes as yet another indicator of their language home base. A person with a compact and muscular body is often visual. Someone with a soft, round body and high proportion of body fat sometimes uses tastes and smell words in their language. The person with a lean, delicate build is often kinesthetic in language.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

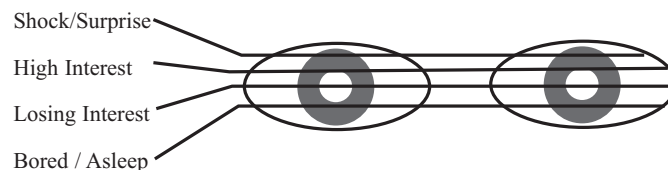
## ☑ The Eyes Have It

Eye movements are among the clearest indicators of someone's thought processes. Research indicates there are two halves to the brain, each half dealing with different types of data. The right brain deals with intangibles and the creative elements. The left brain deals with logic and academic thought. As people use their brains their eyes also move. Each part of the eye movement adds to the information about their thought process.

**23** Watch the direction of a person's eye movements to know more of their thought process. This will enhance your ability to communicate more clearly with them. The following diagram is a map to further guide your understanding, based on where they look. This applies to a right-handed person. Some left-handed people access in exactly the reverse way.



**24** Notice the position of the upper eyelids as another indicator of a person's thought process. The level of the upper eyelid indicates someone's interest in the situation in which they find themselves. The higher the position of the eyelid, the higher their interest level. Careful watching of the upper eyelids will tell you everything you need to know about their interest level.



**25** Watch for the showing or hiding of a red triangular part in the corner of the eye at the side of the nose. This is called the inner canthus. When the inner canthus is visible, the person is showing a degree of interest. When the inner canthus is covered, the person is showing concern or even disagreement. When the person's inner canthus is visible, it is time to ask for "Yes."

**26** Look at the dark center of the eye that is called the pupil. The pupil is dilated when the person is showing a degree of interest or excitement in what they are hearing, seeing, or feeling. The pupil contracts when the person is indicating a concern or lack of interest. Light can change the size of the pupil as well. Be sure you are reading the indications accurately.

**27** Make direct eye contact with people for about five seconds at a time. Do this directly when you are speaking to one other person, or do it in groups when you are speaking to large audiences. If making direct eye contact is difficult for you, look at a spot between the eyes of the other person.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**



## ☑ Questioning Skills

Questions are very powerful because they are always answered, even if those answers are not verbalized (spoken aloud). You will be able to create a number of different situations and reactions by the types of questions you use.

**28** Use information questions to both give and to receive information. A question that includes implied information would be, “Do you want me to send 20 bags of cement to ABC builders? They normally have 10 bags.” (the implication of the standard order of the customer) Another question that states information is. “This job will involve us in about six hours of overtime (the statement). Do you think the team would prefer to do it this week or next?”

**29** Consider a focusing question to focus people on a potential outcome. An example of that is, “Where do you want to be in a year’s time?”

**30** Fill an embarrassing silence with a good question. In an interview, the interviewer could ask the interviewee, “What questions would you like to ask me?”

**31** Ask a question as a way to bring people together when there are difficulties in a relationship. In a sales role, a suitable question might be, “What additional information can I give you that would enable you to make a decision?”

**32** Show that you are listening actively by asking questions. Such a question would be, “Am I right in thinking that what you are saying is...?”

**33** Diffuse a difficult situation by asking a question that serves to calm things. Since questions have to be answered, this will distract someone when they are upset or angry. In customer service, an example would be, “On behalf of the store, I apologize for the mistake. What do you wish me to do to correct the problem?”

**34** Build rapport by asking questions. Rapport can be defined as a harmonious and useful relationship with another. A question such as “How may I help you?” can do just that.

**35** Use an appropriate tone of voice when asking a question so you get the results you are seeking. An inappropriate tone of voice can be counter-productive to your intentions.

**36** Listen to the answer when asking a question. Use the Rapid Repeat Method to listen actively, as mentioned earlier.

**37** Be mindful of your intent when asking a question. There is a fine line between manipulation and motivation.

**38** Keep your question to a question rather than expanding it into a monologue. You are more likely to hold the attention of your listener in this way.

**39** Ask pertinent questions in a conversation. This comes from listening actively so you are aware of what has already been asked and what has already been said.

**40** Communicate a question instead of a statement as a more effective starter, continuer, or finisher of a conversation. Be clear in what you intend to say and how you can best say it.

**41** Use leading questions only after giving great thought to the effect the question will have on the listener. A leading question is where the answer is given in the question. If the listener believes you are using a leading question on purpose, you will instantly lose credibility and break rapport. Politicians are great users of the leading question. “Wouldn’t you agree that our policy on housing is producing results?”

**42** Phrase your question based on the likely response you will get. Asking a priest if you can smoke while you pray will illicit a different response than asking if you can pray while you smoke.

**43** Rather than asking leading questions, design questions for interview and appraisal meetings to start at the end and work backwards. Decide on the information you require and build a series of questions that will enable you to uncover that information. It will take time, and it is time well spent.

**44** Use soft expressions sparingly. “I’m sorry to bother you,” “if you like,” “maybe,” “sort of,” and “I may be wrong but...” are all ways of detracting from the strength and effectiveness of your communication.

**45** Pose a question to a superior or co-worker to gain clarity about the priority of numerous work tasks. A question is far better than a statement to keep the flow of things moving well. A cooperative tone of voice when asking that question is also vital.

**46** Give careful thought to your way of dealing with a team member when you are in a leadership role. “We” language rather than “you and I” will create a better effect and result. An example is, “What suggestions can we come up with to improve our performance?”

**47** Choose appropriate motivational awards for team members you are leading by asking them what they really want as a reward. Selecting something they want will go much further in motivating your team.

**48** Find out what went wrong, not who was wrong when results are different from what you wanted them to be. Ask “What happened?” instead of “Who did this?” Criticize the action, not the person.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

## ☑ Starting a Conversation

When starting a conversation with another person, you are attempting to break the other person's preoccupation with whatever they are doing. Make the person want to listen to you. Excite them, put them at ease, or have them feel important. Each of these reasons is supported with various techniques to have the most effective start to a conversation.

**49** Plan your opening. Give thought to why the other person would want to listen. Think about what you want the outcome of a conversation to be.

**50** Get the other person's name right at the start of any important conversation. Use whatever approaches work best for you in remembering that person's name. Immediately repeat the name in your mind. Look at their face and repeat their name as you ask them a question. Find some feature on their face that begins with the same letter as their name. When the person's surname is unusual, ask them to spell it for you. These all help fix the name in your mind and increase the likelihood that the person will listen to what you have to say.

**51** Smile and be enthusiastic. Smiling is contagious. When you are appropriately enthusiastic about what you have to say, others will want to have a conversation with you. Many sales of products and ideas have been made on enthusiasm alone.

**52** Begin a conversation with a new person who appears receptive by stating a fact and asking for an opinion. Follow a statement with a question. The topics can be based on the other person, yourself, or the situation in which you find yourselves.

**53** Ask yourself motivating questions to persuade yourself to take action. Make an assumption about a goal (e.g., that you will double your income in the next 12 months). Follow that by asking yourself questions about how you will accomplish that, writing down as many ways as you can identify. This highly effective tool was created by Earl Nightingale.

**54** Utilize a variation of the Earl Nightingale Method by asking yourself to complete the sentence "I would have achieved this goal if only I'd..." Write down everything that comes to mind in this self-dialogue. This technique is used best by positioning the goal in your future.

**55** Look in the mirror and force yourself to tell the absolute truth about the questions you ask yourself. This method makes use of the idea of feeling uncomfortable about telling yourself lies. A great question at the end of a day would be, “Did you really give it your best shot today?”

**56** Use the power of your subconscious in affecting outcomes based on your anticipation of that out-come. Ask yourself questions as your conversations proceed. The questions are based on what is being said, how it is being said, and how body language is being used to say it. Questions would be, “I wonder why she said that?” or “What is he really trying to say to me?”

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## ☑ Body Language

According to scientist Professor Albert Mehrabian, body language is the most important and largest percentage of the three major factors of communication. It far surpasses how you say what you say and what you actually do say in words. A staggering 93% of communication relies on aspects other than the words you use. Body language really is the unspoken truth. Active watching is as crucial as active listening. The following tools will help you in reading body language. Consider the gestures within the context of the overall communication rather than in isolation.

**57** Observe a person leaning toward you. They are comfortable in your company or interested in what you are saying. Someone leaning away from you is less comfortable. A person supporting the head with the hand is probably losing interest in what you are saying.

**58** Notice crossed legs and crossed arms. That indicates defensiveness or negativity about the situation. The person is starting to open up when they uncross their legs or arms. When a person goes from open to closed body position, hand them something to hold to open them up again.

**59** Look at the position of a person's palms. A person is being honest when the palms are up. This gesture is used in an exaggerated way when they are being economical with the truth and trying to cover up their true intentions.

**60** Watch for fingertips together forming a steeple. That is a gesture of superiority. The upward-pointing fingers show that person's opinion of his or her position in the relationship. The direction that the thumb is pointing also indicates their level of self-confidence. Hands behind the back is another stance of confidence.

**61** Be aware of the hand over the mouth of the talker. This indicates a nervousness about what the speaker is saying, or that the person may even be lying. The hand over the mouth of the listener, however, has three particular meanings:

- The person using the gesture thinks the other person is lying.
- The person using the gesture wants to speak.
- The person using the gesture does not like what is being seen or heard.



**62** Identify chin stroking as a gesture of evaluation. The person is contemplating what to say next or is making a decision. Other evaluation gestures can be a finger placed on the side of the face, polishing of spectacles, filling a pipe, or lighting a cigarette.

**63** Realize a decision has been made based on what a person's body language tells you. A positive decision is shown by leaning towards you, upper eyelid interest level, smiling, or open body posture. Wait for the "Yes" to be spoken. Seeing the opposite gestures means they are reaching a negative conclusion. Ask a question before the "No" is voiced so you can redirect the situation to a positive one.

**64** View hands being rubbed together quickly as a sign of enthusiasm. Slow hand rubbing is an indicator of nervousness.

**65** Sensitize yourself to gestures that may be about lying or could merely be nervousness. Ask further questions to gain greater insight into the other person's true feelings when you are in doubt about the meaning of the gestures.

**66** Show strong leadership through your own body language. Use techniques such as sitting and standing upright, keeping your head upright with eyes looking forward, placing your fingers in a steepled position, and smiling sparingly.

**67** Counter negative positions by asking questions intended to open up the other person. Use variations of the same question tailored for the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic person. "How do you view what I've said so far?" "How do you feel about what I've said so far?" "Tell me, how does that sound to you so far?" When you get a response of uncertainty, ask another question.

**68** Ask questions that require "Yes" answers as a way to break negativity. A short series of questions that require "Yes" answers will create a positive tone. You will witness the person's body language opening up when they have reached that positive attitude.

**69** Use body language to request feedback to a question you have asked. Simply put out your right hand, palm up, about six inches in front of you and level with your navel as you ask the question. This "over to you" body language gesture clearly indicates handing the conversation over to the other person.

**70** Change your own position as a way to prompt a change in the other person's position. Standing up or moving around while talking may prompt the other person to change posture.

**71** Deal with silence by using a very effective technique: With a smile on your face, look left and right, then lean forward to the other person and say in a conspiratorial tone of voice, "My mother always told me that silence meant 'Yes.' Is that what you mean?"

**72** Watch a person's face. Their expressions are often indicative of what is happening in their minds. The changes in expression need to be watched very carefully.

**73** Build a subconscious rapport with a person through a handshake. Match the speed, pressure, oscillation, and time of their handshake and maintain eye contact. All of this indicates "I am the same as you and present no threat." This is called a parallel handshake.

**74** Deliver a questioning handshake without the other person realizing what you are doing. Do this by having your palm slightly open and then turning your palm slightly down towards your left. The turning movement measures the resistance in the person's wrist, and their resistance to your ideas.

**75** Decide how you want to receive a dominant handshake. This is when someone comes at you with their palm down, forcing you to put your hand in the palm-up submissive gesture. You can present resistance to them, or bring the hand to an upright position, or place your left hand on top to indicate you are on top.

**76** Correct a missed grip of holding the person's fingers instead of the whole hand. Do this by taking hold of the person's right wrist with your left hand. Maintain eye contact. Slide your hand into the full grip and keep shaking hands. Maintain eye contact and the situation will be remedied smoothly.

**77** Dress appropriately for the impression you want to create. When there is any doubt in your mind, dress up rather than be under-dressed. It is easier to remove a jacket, tie, or jewelry than to wish you had brought the items with you.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

## ☑ Open and Closed Questions

An open question will usually solicit large amounts of information. A closed question will solicit a small amount of information, even a one-word answer. A close-ended question provides agreement, contradiction, or short-burst information. The open-ended question seeks much broader information in the responses.

**78** Think about which result you are seeking in your question. Starting questions with “what,” “why,” “when,” “how,” “where,” and “who” will each prompt different types of responses depending on your use. Some will be single-word responses. Others will be much longer. “How many people are in your company?” gives a single-word response. “How do you manufacture that product?” gives a longer response.

**79** Use a close-ended question as a lead-in to an open ended question. “How many people work at your company?” is a close-ended question that could lead to “Why do you have 350 people working at your company?”

**80** Consider the following influences on how you use your voice in asking questions: pitch, inflection, courtesy, tone, understandability, rate, and enunciation. Each element affects the outcome of your question.

**81** Use the language of your audience in public speaking or in a small group. Incorporating its jargon and expressions is a great way to build rapport and say, “I am the same as you. I understand your problems and opportunities.” Use jargon carefully, being sure the listener understands what you are saying. When they don’t understand, it could create alienation instead of rapport.

**82** Include both close-ended and open-ended questions in your public speaking to prompt the audience’s thought process and subsequent discussion. Plan your questions according to the outcome you are seeking.

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## ☑ The Language Itself

Methods and words that are used to persuade and influence people are important to identify. These things are as important as modes of speech and body language.

**83** Incorporate euphemisms as a way of saying what you want to say in a non-offensive way. A euphemism is a mild or vague expression substituted for another expression that is thought to be too harsh or too direct. By saying “I want to think about it,” a person may be avoiding directly saying “No.”

**84** Be aware of using filler words in your language. “um,” “sort of,” “type of,” “well, you know” are all filler words and phrases. They de-emphasize what you are saying.

**85** Soften what you are saying by using link words. Examples are “by the way,” “but,” “however,” “incidentally,” and “oh and...” These words are followed by real information. Words used to emphasize ideas that follow them are “definitely,” “honestly,” “simply must,” and “actually.” However, information following these words may be exaggerated.

**86** Notice how vocal emphasis given to different words in a sentence can totally alter the meaning of the sentence. Practice where you want the emphasis, especially in anticipation of an important meeting.

**87** Realize that everyone is influenced and persuaded to take action based on a requirement of meeting their own individual psychological needs. Personal power and ego gratification are two particularly important needs. Consider how your speaking to a person taps into their psychological needs when you are looking to influence and persuade them in any way.

**88** Access a person’s automatic response mechanism for them to take the action you want. This is done by using the combination of words “need” and “because” in a request you put forth. Use these words to influence a person’s actions. “I need this report done by 5:00 today because the boss is leaving then and has to take it with her.”

**89** Use a method called the Drop Sell technique to influence someone. This approach involves asking someone to do something far in excess of what you really want them

to do, then moving to a lower position of request that they can do more easily. The second request gains agreement because it is so far behind or dropped so low from the first request.

**90** Influence someone's decision by the difference in two or more offers. When they have agreed to buy a large item, they are more easily persuaded to buy a second smaller one.

**91** Offer a free sample or free trial as a way to cause a person to feel obligated to purchase from you. This method is used frequently in supermarkets, airports, and even by street vendors.

**92** Give people time to make a decision when you are seeking to persuade or influence them. This is particularly important so that at the end of the discussion they feel they have played their part in the final details.

**93** Think about the types of people that you can persuade to say "Yes" more easily. These include people you meet on a regular basis in a positive environment; people who you praise; people who are like you; people you know and like; people whose appearance is like yours.

**94** Notice situations when people will say "Yes" more easily to you. Those are when there is perceived scarcity of product; a sample prompting wanting more; a limited-time offer; ease of taking action; a quantity discount; a free gift with purchase; speed of delivery; attractive payment methods; saying "Yes" just once; removal of fear of loss.

**95** Minimize interruptions in your speaking by using the following effective technique: When you are speaking and someone else starts to speak, put your hand with your palm facing the other person and say in a deep voice, "I hadn't finished what I was saying." Then immediately carry on making your point.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**



## ☑ Factors and Incentives

“What” and “why” are both powerful words in persuading people to take the actions you want them to take. “What” is most effective in persuasion when allied with the appropriate “why.” The “why” of the “what” changes according to the person with whom you are talking. The “what” is the factor or feature, the nuts and bolts of anything. The “why” or “why’s” are the incentives or benefits.

**96** Remember that people only ever do things for their own reasons and that they are motivated to take action to avoid pain or gain pleasure. Incentives for any decision include the way the person profits from the factor, the pleasure they obtain, or recognition of how the factor helps them avoid pain.

**97** Frame outcomes in people’s minds. The outcome should be exciting. Make the person feel at ease.

**98** Compliment someone by mentioning the factor as well as the benefit. An example is, “Great car, John, you look successful in that one. Is it a company car?”

**99** Deal with problems with people’s actions at home or at work by using the NORA method:

- N - Now**            The current situation.
- O - Outcome**    The end result you want.
- R - Reason**      Why the person should do as you ask.
- A - Ask**            Ask a question to obtain commitment.

**100** Identify the personality type of the person to whom you are speaking. Each style requires a different approach. Get to the point with a leader. Give a great deal of data to the facts and figures person. Focus on benefits for everyone on the team when talking with a people person. Ask questions of the person in a state of change. Keep the conversation exciting and animated for the creative person.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

## ☑ Dealing with Objections

Some people have a style of responding and talking that makes it seem as if what they say is an objection when in reality it is not. That is the imagined objection. There are five possible sources of imagined objections. Each type requires careful examination to see what to do and say when someone raises an objection.

**101** Re-phrase a negative objection statement into a positive question. An example is when the person says “I don’t like blue.” You translate it into “What colors are available other than blue?” and respond accordingly.

**102** Treat a request for further information as a path toward a positive decision. The person would not ask for more information if they were not somewhat interested.

**103** Listen to what is really being said. Sometimes a person says “No” in ways that sound different from “No.” It could be comments like “that is too expensive” that really mean “No, I don’t want one.”

**104** Explore whether an objection is merely an attempt to find out how strong your beliefs are and to test whether the necessary research has been carried out. Respond to this person with solid data to satisfy their requirement and thereby eliminate their objection.

**105** Review whether the explanation you have given is complete. You may be prompting genuine misgivings when the person does not have adequate information or your proposal is not compatible with their style. Further questioning will uncover the real problem.

**106** Find the real objection. It may be a fear of change, a concern about cost, or a perceived lack of need.

**107** Deal with objections at the appropriate time. There are times when it is appropriate to completely ignore an objection and merely focus on how the benefits outweigh the investment. Other times it will be best to respond to the objection some time after it has been raised. Responding immediately to an objection works in certain situations. On other occasions you will want to anticipate an objection and deal with it in your own timing.

**108** Treat an objection in isolation from the rest of the facts, agree with the objection, or offer the scenario of “just suppose you were going to agree to this.” Each of these approaches can be effective and can be varied throughout your presentation of ideas.

**109** Help the person clarify their thinking when they offer you the “think it over” objection. Sometimes they are having difficulty saying “No” to you. Other times they really do need to examine the various aspects of what you are proposing.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**

## ☑ Getting to Yes

It is sometimes easy to reach agreement smoothly, painlessly, and quickly. Other times it takes a lot of tugging and pulling to finally arrive at “Yes.” There are four main reasons why people do not ask for that “Yes”: fear of rejection; lack of appropriate vocabulary; insufficient practice; lack of belief. Learn to ask for the “Yes.”

**110** Create the habit of asking for “Yes.” Use the “if” question. “If you know that the idea will work with just two people, would you try out the idea?” This is more persuasive than “Would this idea work with just two people?”

**111** Ask a straight question. “Shall we go ahead then?” “Is that agreed?” “What date shall we start?” Practice these words so you feel comfortable using them.

**112** Suggest alternatives in your question. “Would you like the red one or the blue one?”

**113** Use the word “enough” as an effective way to reach “Yes.” “Do you think that next Monday will be soon enough to get started?” “Do you think that ten computers will be enough?”

**114** Seek agreement for a minor part of your idea. That agreement will also apply to the major part. “Do you think that with the new computer system we should have a second printer?” Anyone agreeing to the second printer must have already agreed in principle to have the new computer.

**115** Pose a question in relation to a temperature scale. “On a temperature scale of 1–10, 10 being at the top of the scale, how hot are you now about going ahead with this idea?” Use this technique sparingly.

**116** Be sensitive to the person who will only agree based on other people’s experiences. Make reference to how someone else experienced a similar situation. Another way of dealing with this person is to obtain names of others who will support your ideas, and present those names to the doubtful person.

**117** Use the “do or die” question with someone who just will not make a decision. “Either this is a good idea and we should go ahead now, or it is not a good idea and we should forget about it. Which is it?” This is a last-ditch effort.

## **Summary**

Use the techniques in this booklet to produce the results you want in all your interactions with people in your life. For a more in-depth study of these ideas, read my book *The Secrets of Communication: Be Heard and Get Results*.

**Use this area for any notes you might like to make on the previous study.**





**Peter Thomson** is one of the UK's leading strategists in the areas of communication and personal and business growth. He has a very diverse history and, along with his other ventures, has been a very successful entrepreneur. Having started in business in 1972, he built and sold 3 successful companies, enabling him to retire at age 42. Far from living the leisurely life, however, Peter is an active public speaker, motivator, and writer, having published 3 books, 6 tips booklets, and over a dozen audio programs with Nightingale-Conant. One of his most recent acquisitions has been an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor of Letters) from The American Intercontinental University for his work in communication skills and helping others to succeed in life.

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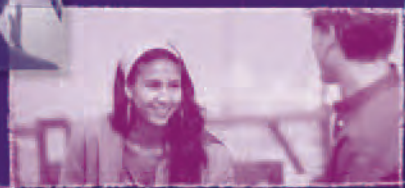
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*How to*  
**SPEAK UP**  
*for yourself*

**On Any Occasion**

*By Peter Thomson*



**Nightingale  
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# IMPORTANT

To begin — Please save this workbook to your desktop or in another location.

## HOW TO SPEAK UP ON ANY OCCASION

### PETER THOMSON

In these days of high-speed written communication, what with Internet, E-mail and Fax, we could think that the opportunities to speak up for ourselves have somewhat diminished, in fact the truth is the very opposite. In nearly every company in the world, meetings are taking place on a daily, if not hourly basis. In nearly every hotel lobby in the world, people are meeting and speaking. In nearly every conference room in the world, delegates are listening to a speaker and so, perhaps because of so many people's reliance on the written word, those who can actually speak up for themselves now have an even greater opportunity to stand out from the crowd. The ideas, methods and techniques you'll hear on these cassettes together with the demonstrations you will see on the accompanying video and the information you will read in the workbook will enable you, by application of those methods, to be totally confident in standing up and saying what you want to say on any occasion. Speaking one to one, speaking to a small group or even speaking from stage to thousands of people.

You will be able to easily overcome any nerves you may have felt in the past at such a prospect, and know how to use that adrenaline rush to your advantage. You will know how to plan and write out what you want to say for any occasion, social or commercial. You'll look forward to speaking, knowing you will be totally in control of yourself, totally in control of any equipment you may use and most importantly, totally in control of the outcome that you desire from those actions.

You'll create greater success for yourself, whatever your definition may be of that emotive word Success, create greater confidence in every area of your life and create greater wealth by being able to express your ideas and the ideas of others clearly, creatively and confidently. So, let's get started straight away as we look at the numerous opportunities to *Speak up* and the topics we will discuss together throughout the programme.

Immediately there is something to learn from what I've just said and as you listen through the programme, from time to time I will stop and comment on a key point that you can take note of, this may be the words I have used or the way in which I have used them or the structure of what's been said. Now, any speech, and that may be as short as a question asked at a meeting right the way through to a major presentation, needs structure. What you just heard in my introduction to you included some key elements: I stated my name, Peter Thomson, gave you some idea of what I was going to say and told you how I believed and knew that you would benefit from the information I am about to share with you. So, name, content and benefits for you.

There are numerous occasions on which to stand and speak up: a presentation to a client or a potential customer, a presentation to a board of directors, standing and speaking at a Parent Teachers Association meeting, a team meeting, a party, a wedding, a funeral, at a dinner where you have to thank the visitors for attending or perhaps respond to a vote

of thanks, at an interview, at an awards dinner where you are either the recipient of the award or the person presenting the award, at a public meeting, political meeting or proposing a toast. There are opportunities for after dinner speaking, being the master of ceremonies, introducing a speaker or giving a testimonial. At training seminars there will be times when you want to respond to a comment or question asked by the seminar leader or trainer, perhaps even disagreeing with what has been said. You might need to stand and speak up when fundraising, at local council meetings, debating societies, church or fraternal associations, perhaps you may be asked to speak at a local school on your specialised subject. In business you may need to make a presentation to a bank, to a potential acquisition or potential purchaser and in times of crisis, everyone looks for a leader, somebody who will take charge and clearly and convincingly and confidently tell the others what needs to be done.

Throughout this programme we will examine together the following key topics and with your repeated listening over the months and years to come, the information will slowly but certainly filter into your long-term memory to the point where you will use the ideas without conscious thought. So, we will look in detail at the benefits of speaking up, the art of persuasiveness, the audience, clothing, planning what you will say, dealing with nerves, logistics and actually writing your speech. Now, let me make a very, very important point here. Throughout the programme I will use the words *Speech, Presentation* and *Audience*. Now these words imply that you will be learning how to speak from stage to an assembled audience of hundreds or even thousands, and yes you will be able to do just that. However, the programme is far more than that. You will use the information, ideas and methods you will learn to *Speak up on any occasion*, the words *audience, speech* and *presentation* are just for ease of understanding. We will look together at the opening and closing of what you have to say, these are critical areas for retention and key impact areas of what you will have to say. We will deal with questions, asking them and responding to them; body language, yours and other people's; using visual aids; voice and delivery styles; getting psyched up and practice. Then I will share some brilliant ideas with you on anchoring the audience to certain gestures, certain voice tones and certain positions.

We will then look at the *PEQ, the Performance Effectiveness Quotient*, solving speaking problems, special occasions and professional speaking plus the fascinating topics of audience continuity and phonological ambiguity, to give you a complete tool box of skills, stories and quotes that you will personalise for your speeches and a wind up to continue to create the confidence you need to stand and speak up for yourself. Well that's a lot of information to cover, so let's cut to the chase and examine the real benefits of being able to *Speak up*.

Most people have never mastered the skills of speaking, and by speaking I mean speaking in front of other people. At school we learnt that standing and reading from a book was an experience to avoid at all costs. The teacher would select the so-called *unfortunate* pupil and say sweetly "Ah! Peter perhaps you would just like to read the next paragraph". Hesitatingly we would rise to our feet to stumble and stutter and stammer through less than a hundred words, our friends and other pupils in our class giggling at our discomfort and, bingo! Our fear of speaking in front of others was born.

Just think that a few years previously we would have been happy to be first on the dance floor, happy to sing in front of other people and even happy to walk naked in front of hundreds on the holiday beach. What happened to that carefree and confident child of our younger years? The world happened! That's what happened, yes, over time the world, and by that I mean our parents, friends and teachers, taught us that it was acceptable to be scared, to be coy, to be less than confident. What a shame!

Well, the time has come for us realise how much of life we have been missing out on, by living by other people's rules. Just imagine you standing up in front of fifteen of your work colleagues and clearly explaining your thoughts on a revolutionary new way to improve the department's efficiency. How much would that be worth in self-esteem, self-confidence, in money? Just imagine being perceived as the confident one as you stand and pose a well-structured, incisive and thoughtful question to the local politician at a political meeting. Well, as most people can't do it, won't do it, are scared stiff even at the thought, just imagine how you will feel. When you can stand and speak up for yourself, it will be perceived as powerful and successful. Because so many people don't speak up, those who can are seen as powerful, why? Simply because their actions are those which others would love to have the confidence to take.

Some years ago, I ran a successful leasing brokerage in Birmingham, in England. Each person in that company had to learn to speak up for themselves. Regular administration departmental meetings were held where each person, regardless of age, status or time with the company had to stand and deliver a short presentation regarding their commercial actions and any thoughts they had to improve the efficiency of their department. I remember a particular young woman who joined the company aged seventeen. She confessed some years later that she even became embarrassed at the sound of her heels clicking, as she crossed the road with other people. Her subsequent skill at speaking meant that just a few years later, aged twenty-two, she secured a job in Canada as a PA to a successful businessman. Now she flies around the world acting on his behalf, standing and speaking to other people on real estate and financing. What a change in such a short space of time! It appears that the expression *Confidence is the application of confidence* is certainly true. Others, who were fortunate to go through those early days of speaking experience, have similarly benefited from achieving positions and financial reward they had not dreamed were possible.

A few years ago I was asked by a multi-level marketing company to present their products and financial prospects at an evening event called *Opportunity meetings*. It was great fun! The audience, usually about two hundred in number, were usually somewhat sceptical and anyone speaking had to be on their toes to be able to answer any questions posed. The format of the evening was that I was to act as the MC (Master of Ceremonies), and others involved in the organisation would deliver various parts of the presentation. One evening, the man who had been scheduled to deliver the second section hadn't appeared by the time the evening's presentation was due to start, and it was up to me to find a replacement or deliver that speech myself. I approached a very confident man who was involved in the company to see if he would volunteer to do the slot. The look on his face was something to behold! Yes, he was extremely confident when it came to speaking to one other person, in fact, some would describe his



personality as forceful, certainly assertive, but when it came to standing and delivering a piece of information, and one he knew well, to just two hundred people, he was as nervous as I have seen anyone at such a prospect. Anyway, whilst the first section was being delivered, about fifteen minutes or so, I briefed the man on what he had to say, how he had to say it and how to deal with the nerves. He went on, he spoke for ten minutes, not flawlessly, but certainly at a level far beyond his own expectations, he loved it! The nerves were there but he felt so good about the experience and the change he had made in the audience members' minds that he couldn't wait to enjoy the experience again. The next week he stood and spoke, and so it went on, week after week, month after month. The change in him was so dramatic, he no longer used his usual somewhat aggressive style in normal conversations, he finally realised that to persuade, to influence and to motivate didn't need aggression, it needed persuasion skills of the highest order. Skills that could only be honed by standing and speaking.

So, let's look at some of the ideas that you'll learn on this programme and the fantastic results you will enjoy as a result of the use of your skills. Those who can express their ideas clearly, get paid more than those who can't and that's a simple fact. Yet, more surprisingly, or perhaps not so, those who present the ideas of others are often credited with having those ideas even when they say they didn't have them. Such is the nature of society that the messenger is often given credit for the message. Should the day ever come when you decide to take the upward movement from speaking to a small group of people into the arena of professional speaking, you will find that the rewards can be extremely high. High in a financial sense, high in an emotional sense and high in self-regard. The ability to expand your ideas will open many doors. When we look at the heads of business, politics, the church, the armed forces, associations or any group of people we find that those head people have the ability to stand and speak. Some of them are great at it, some of them are good and some of them not so good, however, they can all do it and sometimes that's all it takes. It has been said that President Ronald Reagan was one of the all time great communicators and certainly during all his campaigns and earlier presidential years he demonstrated his persuasive abilities to stand and speak up. Some political commentators would argue that political leaders are elected not necessarily because of their experience but often simply because of their looks and their proficiency at speaking up.

As you master the art of speaking throughout this programme you will find that you will become more successful, particularly commercially successful. If you're a leader of people, you need to move your team members into action, motivate them, or increase their output and you will be able to do exactly that. Just think of the time saving aspects of being able to speak up in front of others. I've certainly known managers who, because of their inability to speak to their team members as a group, have had to conduct many hours of one to one meetings. How many hours they have wasted over their careers. If you have ten people to speak to, and the talk is one hour long, then nine hours of time can be saved by speaking to them altogether rather than one at a time.

One of the greatest benefits of speaking is the rub-off effect into the other areas of your life. As your confidence grows with standing and speaking you'll find that you are more confident doing other things. Amazingly, this rub-off effect works across

activities, confidence to speak can improve a person's golf game, confidence to speak can improve a person's social life and confidence to speak can definitely improve relationships with other people. Strange isn't it to think that golf can be improved by speaking and yet if we examine this, it's obvious why it works. Golf, in common with many sports, is probably 90% mental and 10% physical; therefore confidence impacts on this mental 90%. Standing at the first tee on the company golf day with fifty other people watching would take, in some people's view, a great deal of confidence, perhaps even more confidence than standing and speaking. So you can see how this application of confidence in one area can rub off into another area.

As your skills improve in speaking there will no doubt be occasions when you wish to use visual aids to increase the impact of your message. Flipcharts, overhead projectors or even computer-generated graphics can all play their part. Once the motivation to use these aids has firmly come into play, because of your wish to improve impact you learn how to master them. In my own life I certainly wouldn't have considered myself a computer whiz, however, as time has gone by it has been necessary for me to learn to use PowerPoint for presentations. That learning curve has been very helpful in many areas of my business life. Years spent giving presentations to vastly differing audience sizes has given me skills in overhead projection I would never have gained without the experience, and all of these visual benefits have been gained by taking the decision to stand and speak up. Technology is certainly moving at an ever increasing pace and our skills in this area need to be improved all of the time

The ability to communicate is the essential ability of mankind. That is certainly true, as without that ability nothing gets done. The skills you will learn on this programme will enhance your ability to communicate in all areas of your life. When we discuss the deeper aspects of communication such as anchoring, phonological ambiguity and audience continuity, I know that you will be as surprised as I was when I first learnt these techniques. Just think of the various skills I outlined in the preview a few moments ago and how your increased level of skill will impact on everything else you do. When we discuss the skill of *Mindmapping* in the *Writing your talks* section, you will learn a skill, which you'll use in note taking, research and creativity, producing colourful word and picture mind maps of which you'll be proud. The main psychological needs of any person, you or I are the following; pride, ego, gratification and personal power. What better way could there be to satisfy these necessary needs than to stand and speak and receive the applause, and from a satisfied audience? This applause can take various forms: hand clapping, increased salary, increased recognition or even the approbation of those whose opinion we value. Each time we demonstrate that personal power, we increase our feelings of self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence. Everyone likes to be praised and what simpler way of receiving praise than to stand and speak.

In today's commercial world, where the vast majority of people have numerous jobs and at times the job market is really competitive, having additional speaking and communication skills can really provide the edge. Going for a senior position in a new organisation and being able to demonstrate your past success in presenting the company's message must surely be advantageous. Successful people these days often seem to get involved in charity work and find themselves thrust into the limelight to

give perhaps, the most difficult speech of their lives, a speech that concludes with a request to people to donate to the worthy cause in question. Well, by the time you have completed this programme you will know how to appeal to the hearts and minds and understand how and when to close the deal. Asking for a pay rise can be a challenging prospect. However, with proper planning, great opening, good content and a strong closing argument, your chances of success will greatly improve. All of these aspects will be covered for you. All in all, massive benefits will accrue to you by your application of the ideas, methods and techniques that you will learn in this programme.

At an appropriate moment I would like you to give some thought to the following two points:

- 1) What do you think you have been losing or losing out on by perhaps not standing and speaking up as often as you might? (This is what I will call *Away motivation* and we will discuss its use later in the programme).
- 2) How will you benefit in the future by the application of the new skills you will have? (This is *Towards motivation* and again I will discuss this later in the programme).

Be as specific as you can in your answer to those two questions because when you know specifically in your own mind, by your own admission what you have been losing and what major benefits you will gain, then you will be motivated by both *Away* and *Towards* motivation to learn to use all of the skills we'll cover together. Let me ask you those questions again:

- 1) What do you think you have been losing or losing out on by perhaps not standing and speaking up as often as you might?
- 2) How will you benefit in the future by the application of the new skills you will have?

## **THE ART OF PERSUASION**

So, what does persuasion mean? Well in my mind if someone is persuasive then they have the skills to motivate people, the skills to move people and the skills to get people to agree with what they have to say. In fact, the dictionary defines persuasive as cogent, compelling, convincing, credible, effective and influential and yes, that's exactly what we need to be, all of these things when we speak up for ourselves. Let's examine the traits that are common in persuasive people. Certainly the top trait must be honesty, as Edbert Mahon said *Honesty is the single most important factor, having a direct bearing on the final success of an individual corporation or product*. I'd like to think of it in this way: Life is a boomerang and whatever we throw out at the world, the world will return to us. When we speak simple words, with absolute honesty, people will understand and believe everything we have to say. The most cogent argument put forward without total belief will be spotted by every single member of your audience.

Enthusiasm is certainly a key trait in being perceived as persuasive and a smile is one of the simplest ways to persuade. Enthusiasm is perhaps the second most contagious disease; negativity is probably the most contagious. You can demonstrate your enthusiasm by the words you say, the way in which you say those words, the body

language you use and of course, the look on your face. If you demonstrate a positive attitude towards your audience, your material and your life in general, then every single member of the audience will perceive that attitude. Eloquent use of the language itself will be persuasive providing the language is appropriate to those who hear it. Eloquence, in other words, fluency in the use of words is created by practice.

Persuasiveness is also perceived when action is taken. The expression *A good example is worth a hundred times good advice* says it all. Actions speak louder than words and if you're knowledgeable about the subject you are talking about and prepared properly then the audience will know and they'll treat you accordingly. There's an old expression, which says, *You have to be heard to be believed*: perhaps we should reverse this expression and restate it as *You have to be believed to be heard*. Some years ago Gerald Ratner made a major mistake when at an Institute of Directors meeting, he made a joke when he remarked that some of the items of jewellery in his shop were worth less than a prawn sandwich from Marks and Spencer's. Unfortunately for Mr Ratner he was believed, his business empire fell apart all due to one unfortunate comment. It's so simple in the heat of the battle to get carried away and make comments that later we wish we had never made. In the speaking profession this is known as *being hung by the tongue*.

When a speaker is totally committed to the idea they are putting forward and the result they desire, anyone who hears them will feel, see and hear that total commitment. This is persuasion. Those fortunate few who really enjoy standing and speaking, and following this programme I am certain that you will be numbered amongst them, are perceived as persuasive by the audience's response to their own enjoyment. A few moments ago I mentioned that the body language you will exhibit will certainly add to your persuasiveness: to be persuasive you need to walk with confidence, avoid tripping over as you stand to speak and should you unfortunately trip over, then be strong, make comment about it and restart the whole of your presentation. Ten years ago whilst walking up to the stage, I tripped and stumbled. An embarrassing experience, what did I do? Well I continued onto the stage, shook hands with the person who had introduced me and made my first comment to the audience about the dangers of tripping up stairs. I know, however, that the start of my speech was affected by that trip. Take care when you stand to speak. You will have seen, as I have, films of politicians falling up stairs, down stairs and even off stairs, and it does make an impact on the audience. However, I don't think that that impact is positive or persuasive.

Just think for a moment of the people whom you find persuasive. What is it they do or say to make you feel that way about them? Is it the way they look? That will certainly be a factor. Is it what they say or how they say it? Think for a moment of the most persuasive person you have met, someone who with honesty and integrity got you to believe almost anything they said. What was it about them that made you feel that way? Of one thing I'm certain, they weren't perfect in every way, probably far from it. As I think about the persuasive politicians of history, like Churchill, Hitler, Kennedy, Castro, Reagan, Thatcher, they certainly weren't perfect in every way, each had their foibles and their distinct features. Not everyone would agree with Hitler's politics.

However, everyone would agree that in their time and place these people were definitely considered persuasive.

Perhaps one of the major problems with standing and speaking, is nerves, and I will certainly be covering this and how to deal with them in great detail later on in the programme. The challenge seems to be that inexperienced speakers feel they have to be perfect. No! That simply isn't the case. Look at the historical examples I have just mentioned. Now think of the people who make you cringe, those who couldn't persuade you to buy a bottle of water at minimum cost in the middle of the desert when you hadn't drunk for two days. What is it about them that makes you feel that way? Is it what they say? Probably not, more likely the way they say what they say and the body language they use. Could it be the way they are dressed or could it be their eye movements? As human beings you and I are extremely perceptive, we take in vast quantities of information in just one glance and when we are involved in a conversation. Wow! Do we pick up some stuff at a subconscious level! Eye movement and eye contact are very important in persuasiveness and again I will go into great detail about eye movement and body language later.

Your credibility is essential for persuasiveness and this can be created in your audience's minds in a number of ways. First the person who introduces you can state your credentials, that's probably the easiest way to do it. If this is not relevant or possible then a brief summary of your achievements can be used. However, take care, I have seen speakers at the smallest event spend almost a quarter of their allotted time in talking about themselves. There is a better way to do it. If you're speaking to let's say your team at work, to establish your credibility in relation to a particular problem is far better than bold facts.

Your voice tones can be persuasive; a motivational message delivered in a monotone certainly won't do it. However, a note of warning, congruency is the key. The voice tones, content and body language must be in harmony. The easiest way to destroy credibility or persuasiveness is incongruency; the audience will spot it immediately. You can be loudly spoken or softly spoken, both can be persuasive in the right situation. Do you remember the old fire and brimstone preachers of the Wild West films; they certainly weren't softly spoken but certainly were persuasive. Good pacing will make you more persuasive, building up to the actions you want your listeners to take and when you get to the action stage of your speech or talk if it's appropriate, then clearly tell the audience what actions to take. Leaving them with a vague notion of what they are supposed to do is not the way to do it. Tell them what to think by explaining why they should think that way, and what to do by explaining the consequences of those actions. After all, all communication is an attempt to persuade someone else to do or avoid doing something either now or in the future. Let me say that again, all communication is an attempt to persuade someone else to do or avoid doing something either now or in the future.

When someone is passionate about what they are saying it shines out of their eyes, you can feel the juice they are generating both for themselves and for those who are listening. This is why practice is so essential. It is only by practice that we learn to

deliver what we say with passion and congruent actions. The language you use to your listeners will make a major difference in the level of persuasiveness you generate. Using such words as *tell* and *I* too often will lose the audience's minds as well as their hearts. *We, together* and *share* are far better, the last thing you want to create is an *us* and *them* feeling. The way that you dress will persuade the audience to believe you. Later I will go into more about what to wear for you. Humour can be persuasive provided it's appropriate to the audience, an off colour joke told on a stag night may go down well but the same joke in different circumstances could end a career. Self-deprecating humour is good, as long as it is said with total sincerity. The telling of stories which the audience can relate to is a brilliant way to build rapport and persuade. The best stories in my experience are those that start out with a problem and as the stories proceed, the solution is found. When the story relates to you or can be made relevant to what you say, this can be one of the most powerful of persuasion devices. For thousands of years, stories have been used to persuade others how to think, how to feel and what to do.

So, let me give you a checklist of persuasiveness. To be persuasive you must be: honest, enthusiastic, have a positive attitude, be eloquent, be action orientated, be believable, be committed to your ideas, be congruent with your content, voice and actions. Avoid any concern about having to be perfect, use good eye contact, establish your credentials, be passionate, dress appropriately, use appropriate humour and use stories to make your point. So, there we have it, persuasion, and a number of key ideas for you to note on how to be more persuasive than ever before. Action is the key to success. Knowing about persuasion and being persuasive are two totally different things. At every opportunity examine how you attempt to persuade others to *buy in* to your point of view. Note what works and what doesn't. Look for the reaction both in what's said and the listeners' body language postures, think about what you do and be aware of the impact of your actions. You will forever continue to improve your persuasiveness.

If there weren't an audience, everybody would be happy if not delighted to stand up and speak up for themselves. Now, I'm going to give you some incredibly useful information about profiling your audience and by the end of this session, you will I know realise that speaking up is so easy when proper thought and preparation takes place, when you know your audience and when you're focused on providing benefit for them. The only real difference between speaking to yourself and speaking to others is that there's an audience, and an audience is going to give you some feedback on what you have said.

Let's examine five areas regarding the audience: goals; the breakdown of the audience: the differences; the theme; and the feedback. So, first, your goals. It is absolutely essential that for any speaking that you do, that you set your goals. Later, when I discuss in greater detail for you the subject of overcoming nerves, one of the ways will be setting goals for the outcome of your speaking actions. The old expression *If you don't know where you're going, all the roads lead there* certainly applies to speaking. So, many people who stand to speak, regardless of the occasion, seem to start off in one direction and then, because of the lack of a clear destination for their talk, wander about all over the place and never quite get to where it appears they were going to go. Your goal at this stage must have two parts: a) The goal regarding the audiences satisfaction,

b) A goal regarding your performance. The way that you establish these goals is quite simple: taking a few moments you ask a self-question in writing. The reason it must be in writing is that first you are using more of your senses when you write the goals, rather than just thinking about them, you'll see the words on paper, hear the words in your mind and feel the movement of writing the words. So you're using your visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses. Second you are able to review your goals perhaps a number of times prior to speaking. Third, you're able to check your performance against these written goals following your performance.

To set your audience satisfaction goals, you just need to answer the following questions:

- 1) Who are they? In other words, who will hear and see me speak.
- 2) What do they want? In other words, what is the outcome the audience members want from the words I'll say and the actions I'll take?
- 3) Where are the audience? Now by this I mean where are they in relation to their knowledge about the subject and where are they in life? For this you'll use a sub set of questions, which are:
  - a) Where are they now?
  - b) How did they get here?
  - c) Where are they going?
  - d) Why do they want to go there and what are the potential obstacles and what do they need to do to get there?  
When will I see them and be talking to them?
  - e) Why should they listen?
  - f) How will they react?

Once you have answered these simple questions, you'll have a very good idea about how or what you say will impact the audience and you'll be very focused on ensuring you will provide the result they want.

Next, you will need to set your performance goals; again, you will do this by answering in writing a self-asked question. Simply take a piece of paper and write a focused question at the top of the page. The question will be phrased like this: What are my goals when I talk to my team on Wednesday? Your answers might be along the following lines:

- 1) To be the very best I can be at presenting my ideas for the upcoming change in the department procedures.
- 2) To be outwardly focused at all times.
- 3) To be totally professional in all I do and say.
- 4) To have an enjoyable meeting for all concerned.
- 5) To use *we* language and not *you* language. I can assure you that the two key differentials between successful speakers and not so successful speakers is that the successful ones always, always, always set goals for their speaking and those goals are outward focused and not inward focused.

Now, let's look at the breakdown of the audience. You'll need to know and record details of the audience in the following areas, obviously subject to whether your speech is commercial or social, formal or informal, long or short:

- 1) Job specification: what the audience members do for a job will affect the way they view what you have to say. Now you really need to take care in this area about any preconceptions you may have. Some years ago I spoke for a major accountancy firm at an evening event. The audience was all accountants and lawyers, my speech was to be on marketing of all things, not something you would normally associate in your mind with lawyers and accountants. It would have been easy for me to think prior to the event that the audience members would be less than receptive to such ideas, albeit I was sticking to my brief given by the client, and for a while I did think that it would be a real challenge. In fact, they were fascinated by the ideas. It was a real change for them.
- 2) Their ages: a younger or older audience than you may have wildly different views from yours. This will need to be taken into consideration; different ages also tend to have a different vocabulary. You'll need to take care that they understand the words they use.
- 3) Sex: if the audience is all male, all female or a mixture it can make a major difference to what you have to say and how you say it.
- 4) Race.
- 5) Creed.
- 6) Culture.
- 7) Interests: there are two factors in the areas of interests. What are their current interests and what is their potential interest in what you have to say? It may be that the audience members have mixed interests. Some of them have the same interests as you and some do not, you'll need to take this into account when you deliver what you have to say. It will be necessary to tailor your speech to the audience. If they have mixed interests, be careful of any jargon you use, it may build rapport with some people but alienate the others who simply do not understand what you are saying.
- 8) The knowledge level of the audience: this is obviously important because if you treat them as though they do not have the knowledge when they do, they'll think you are being condescending and if you treat them as though they do have the knowledge when they don't, they'll think you are being superior. It's a fine line to tread. You can understand why so many people don't like to stand and speak for themselves can't you? Understandably, they're concerned about what other people will think, however, proper preparation as you and I are going through now, eradicates these concerns.
- 9) The enthusiasm level of the audience: this is a key question. Have they been sent or did they come of their own accord? If they have been sent are they happy to be there? You and I have certainly been sent to some event or other, even if that was in the very early days of our commercial lives. Can you remember thinking perhaps, why am I here? Why do I have to listen to this? Well perhaps, there are times when you are speaking that the audience may be thinking the same.
- 10) Have they paid to be there? Now you may think this is only relevant for professional speakers, however, I have known a number of events which a company organised



for customers or potential customers to attend and a ticket price was set. Yes, there were professional speakers, however, members of the company also spoke and so, found themselves speaking to an audience who had paid to attend, and yes, it does make a difference.

In the direct mail business, marketers create a profile of their potential customers. I know, I do it in my business and that profiling is in effect a series of questions regarding the potential client or customer. This is done in order to match more precisely the offer to the market's perceived wants and needs. This is exactly the same process you can use when you have to stand and speak. So, let me summarise those ten points and give you some examples of wants and needs by discussing differences.

- 1) Job specification.
- 2) Age.
- 3) Sex.
- 4) Race.
- 5) Creed.
- 6) Culture.
- 7) Interests.
- 8) Knowledge level.
- 9) Enthusiasm level.
- 10) Have they paid?

There are a number of differences of which we should be aware. The time of day will make a difference, if you are speaking at 8.00am, the audience will be in a different mode and mood from the one that will be in at say 6.00pm. If you are talking at a company dinner after the coffee stage it may be that most people have had drinks with dinner and some of them may even have had too many drinks with dinner. The previous speaker will make a difference. Let's say you are going to at a company meeting to announce to the staff that the company is going to move to new premises, a pretty easy speech to make with proper preparation. However, unbeknown to you it has been arranged for the chairman of the company to attend the meeting and give a brief presentation regarding the company's future just prior to your talk. He, the chairman, is in a particularly difficult mood that morning and whilst the content of his speech is good, the staff members are pretty down in the mouth by the time you come to make your presentation. Will this make a difference? You bet it will! You'll need to read that audience very carefully and make sure you are very different from the chairman.

Let me give you some examples of audience needs: they want to be entertained, they want to be informed, they want to be reassured. Now this may be because change is in the air, there have been rumours circulating about the company, they may be concerned about their jobs. In all these situations you have to remove their worry. They may want to feel that they're part of a team, they may want to be taught something or learn something new, they may want to be agreed with, they want to make money, they want to be motivated to take actions. You and I know you cannot motivate anyone. You can only provide a motivational atmosphere in which people wish to become self-motivated, they may wish to demonstrate their knowledge or personal power, they may

want to be recognised for their contribution, or they may want their doubts, fears or concerns addressed. You need to give thought to these wants and needs and calculate how, by what you say, it will address them. This is actually a very useful process as by going through your thoughts about the audience's needs, you can on many occasions write the body of what you will say.

Now for some more differences. The occasion will obviously make a difference because I know that you and I would think that way, although, judging by some of the speeches I have seen, it is apparent that not everybody else realises this fact. Some words, some stories, some styles are simply not appropriate to the occasion. Naturally certain stories or information would be relevant in one situation but less so in another, a story told at a wedding would probably not fit a christening. You may have the opportunity, as I had, to give the same speech to very different audiences, a sales team, a board meeting, a full company meeting, a team meeting. Yes, the same speech but adjusted to the wants and needs of the audience, taking into consideration the breakdown of the audience and changing words and phrases and stories to make the information more acceptable and more easily understood. The theme of the event at which you're speaking will change the style of your presentation. Simply ask the organiser what the theme is. For example, let's say you are going to speak at a Parent Teachers Association meeting and that the theme of the evening is life after school, then you would tailor your presentation to match with that theme. It is relatively easy to add or remove stories to match with a theme.

Now, let's look at feedback, there are number of ways in which you get feedback to what you have said, the applause will clearly tell you if what you had to say made a difference to them and met their needs. The approving look of other delegates at a training seminar as you ask your incisive question will tell you, you asked it well or at the very least that you were thinking in the same mode as the others. If you are speaking on a training day as the trainer or seminar leader, you can have feedback forms for the delegates to complete at the end of your session. Make certain that these feedback forms ask the right questions, you want to learn from the feedback, not just feel good about what you have done. The feedback forms could contain requests for the delegate's opinion on content, style, ease of understanding, ease of use and visual aids used. In the professional speaking arena, testimonials are great feedback and perhaps the one, which clearly tells you that what, you did went down well, is being asked back to speak again. So, there are some key thoughts for you on the audience, set your goals, performance and audience satisfaction goals. Get a full breakdown of the audience, look carefully at the audiences needs and wants, examine the differences, check the theme and create a feedback mechanism of some description, so you use every time you speak as a learning opportunity.

## CLOTHING

Now, let's examine the impact of your clothing on the audience, and how clothing affects their understanding and acceptance of what you have to say. There are so many great expressions regarding clothing, here are just a few: *You never get a second chance to make a first impression, You can't judge a book by the cover, nor can you!* Or my favourite

*What you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying.* Let me say that one again, *What you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying.* So, you never get a second chance to make a first impression, trite, yes, glib, perhaps, true, definitely. Whenever, you stand to speak up for yourself regardless of the occasion, those who are about to hear you speak will definitely only give you one chance to make that vital first impression. It's been said that members of a jury assess the guilt or innocence of the defendant in a trial within the first few seconds of seeing him or her, and thereafter simply listen to the evidence to hear which parts fit their first impression. Wow! If that's true and it seems reasonable to suppose that it is, then no wonder we keep hearing of mistakes in the legal system. Of course, it also raises the issue, that juries must acquit guilty defendants because they look innocent. Frightening, isn't it? You can't judge a book by the cover, well if the jury research is anything to go by, people do judge the book by the cover. I'm certain that you, like me, have had this experience in your life. We've met someone and in that first meeting we made a judgement, we decided that we either liked or didn't like the person. Subsequent events and experience indicated that our first impression was wrong. However, in between that first assessment and our changed opinion, we dealt with that person based on that first impression, didn't we? People do judge books by the cover; so, we need to be careful with the covering. My favourite, *What you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying* covers more than just clothing. In my mind it covers every aspect of human interaction, but for now let's take the expression to again confirm that we need to be extremely careful how we dress.

*Well dressed is to be appropriately dressed.* What is the expected dress code for the situation in which you are to speak? Many companies have casual days and I would personally not select a casual day to deliver a formal presentation to my team or to the whole company. Why? Simply because I would want the way I was dressed to be congruent with the message I was delivering. Not only must the clothing be appropriate to the situation; it must be appropriate to you. If you feel extremely uncomfortable in what you are wearing then that feeling will seep into your message and your audience will know that something is just not quite right. Be yourself!

Let me talk about men's ties for a moment. Some years ago I heard about some research that indicated the power of this small piece of often brightly coloured cloth, the necktie or tie. Apparently a researcher went off to a railway station and approached passengers with the story that he'd lost his wallet and needed just a couple of dollars to get home. The researcher was reasonably successful in his requests and collected quite a lot of money from the helpful to whom he spoke. He wasn't wearing a tie but was wearing a smart business suit, polished shoes etc. Next, he went to a different railway station and repeated the experiment, this time with a tie. Yes, dressed exactly the same, smart suit, polished shoes, except this time he wore a small piece of cloth around his neck, a tie. The result, he collected far more money, far more money! Why? Because with his tie and with his whole ensemble complete, he looked believable. In other words as I mentioned to you earlier, you have to be believed to be heard and not the other way round. The simple mistakes I see with men's ties are these, ties tied too short, ties tied too long and ties which aren't straight. Some months ago a trainer came into my company to spend half a day with the director team. His tie was tied so short that his stomach which wasn't that large, although it wasn't that small, showed below his tie.

His suit was smart, his shoes were polished, his material was excellent. However, I couldn't help noticing and constantly noticing the length of his tie and his stomach sticking out below it. There was gap of about three inches between the end of his tie and his trouser belt; it does make a difference. The other end of the scale is also important, tying a tie so that it hangs three or four inches below the belt simply doesn't look right, and as you will see on the video, the tie that has the knot half under the collar just totally destroys credibility. If you wear a tie, check that it is the right length and portrays the image that you are trying to portray. What does your clothing say about you? Everything! Research by Robert Teledyne in his excellent book *Influence, Science and Practice* clearly indicates that we do react differently to different clothing. Authority figures in uniform do get heard in a different way.

Good looking people are perceived as more believable. Well maybe we can't change our looks without going to the expense of plastic surgery, but we can make the best of what we have. You can imagine being at let's say a seminar, where one of the delegates gets up to ask a question of the seminar leader. He is scruffily dressed, his suit crumpled and badly in need of pressing, shirt cuffs so frayed that you see that fact from some way away, a tie that has fallen out with belt and shoes you'd think about putting on even to do the gardening. Before this unfortunate man even opens his mouth you would have made a judgement about him. Regardless of how eloquently he asked his question, his words would have been coloured by your perception, wouldn't they? The way you dress is critical to your success in business, in life and definitely in speaking. If you aim to speak up on a regular basis then it is worth investing in the right clothes. I have always found that if I was at all unsure of what to wear for a particular occasion, I would dress up slightly of my expectations knowing that I could slightly dress down later. It's easy to take off a tie and roll up shirtsleeves, if that is the appropriate dress for the occasion, rather easier than wishing I had brought a tie and jacket. Perhaps you might even consider investing in the fees for a colour consultant, someone to advise you exactly which colours and clothes and cloth suit your colouring. Pens should be removed from sight before speaking. Bulky wallets in jacket or trouser pockets should be removed. Anything that has the slightest chance of distracting the audience just has to go, whilst at the same time you must be yourself. You may decide that loud clothes are you, Great! As long as it's a thoughtful decision and not be a default to a non-thoughtful process in your mind.

As a young man I was constantly reminded by my father to polish the back of my shoes. Anyone following you upstairs, he told me, will only see the back of your shoes and they'll make a judgement about you from them. He was right of course, and in these days of wipe on/wipe off polish, it is so easy to keep shoes in good condition. Over the next few days keep a special look out for shoes. I know you'll be surprised at how badly shoes are treated. Now, this isn't a campaign for shoes but you know that when you spot something about a person, whatever it may be, you will apply that judgement to everything they do and say. If you find that speaking up becomes a major part of what you do, then keep a separate pair of shoes for driving and keep cleaning materials in your car for those bad weather days. Have non-slip soles and avoid metal tips if you are going to speak from stage, they can slip and create noise.

Let me round off this session with some of the mistakes that people make with dress. Whilst it isn't necessary to be absolutely up to the minute with fashion, clothes that look like they came out of the ark will taint your message with their age. Old clothes, old message. Scruffy, garish or too tight will have an impact, skirts too short or too long for that matter will change the message. Messed up hair can indicate messed up thinking. Whilst the message, the words, the speech should stand on their own if they're good enough, it just isn't like that in today's world. Be careful how you dress and check in the mirror before speaking. Remember that you'll never get a second chance to make that first impression. You can judge a book by the cover, and what you are and how you dress speak so loudly that when you get it right they will hear what you're saying.

## PLANNING

Now, we come to one of the determining factors of success in speaking and that is planning. As with most planning, the key to success is by starting with the outcome and working backwards from that point. When I run my seminars on Communication Skills and get to the topic of *Questioning skills*, then I explain it in this way. What is the outcome you want from the conversation? What are the answers you need to receive to arrive at that outcome, and therefore what are the questions you need to ask to get the answers to get that outcome? Let me say that again. You decide on the outcome, you work out the answers which will get you the outcome, and then you work out the questions, which will get you the answers, which will get you the outcome. In this section I'll cover: deciding on the results you want from your speaking; an excellent way to plan out what you're going to say called the "Carpet fitter's technique"; how to research material; calculating the amount of time you'll need to prepare and the amount of material you will need dependant on how long you're going to be speaking for; how a theme will help you glue all the ideas together; what to do if you're asked to speak without warning; and how to write an introduction for someone else or for yourself. So, what will be the benefits for you of all this information? Well, planning doesn't leave success to chance and so when you know exactly how to plan out what you're going to say on any occasion you'll be better prepared, more focused and have a major way to overcome any nerves you may feel at delivering what you want to say. In addition, you'll deliver your ideas with clarity and conviction knowing precisely where your talk is going and your audience will understand far better.

We've already looked at asking ourselves a number of questions when it comes to the audience, now it's necessary to ask similar questions regarding the occasion, company, organisers and indeed yourself. Perhaps the first question you need to ask yourself is whether or not it is going to be you who actually gives the presentation, makes the speech or asks the question. If this answer is yes, then everything over the next part of the programme will be critical to your success. Let's imagine for a moment that you're going to give a presentation to the board of directors at your company and that the whole of your future success will be determined by this presentation. Obviously, you would ask yourself a number of questions regarding that presentation. Let's start by looking at the questions you would ask, questions about the company.

- 1) What is my position in the company?
- 2) Who will be in the audience?
- 3) What do I know about the various members of the board?
- 4) Do I know who has the power of decision?
- 5) How is the company performing financially at the moment?
- 6) Are there any hidden agendas?
- 7) How will my proposal to the board affect the company and the board members?  
Does it put any of the board members in jeopardy?
- 8) What are the cost implications of my idea?
- 9) What are the profit implications of my idea?
- 10) Can I get support from other company members prior to the meeting?
- 11) How will my proposals affect other staff members?
- 12) Have I made previous presentations to the board and if so what did I learn from that experience?
- 13) Who else has made presentations to the board and what can I learn from their experience?
- 14) Will I need to include a call for action in view of the fact that this presentation is to board members?
- 15) How has the board reacted to similar proposals in the past?
- 16) At what time of day will I be speaking and how will this affect the board members?
- 17) In the whole scheme of things how important is my proposal to the board members?
- 18) Will I need visual aids and if so what?
- 19) Will I need to give out handouts?
- 20) How will I dress for my presentation?

Now, whilst this is not a definitive list you can already see that in the planning stage, a number of questions need to be asked regarding the occasion. A clear focus on the outcome you require and the outcome the audience requires will immediately tell you what you need to include in your speech, presentation or question. Once you have decided on the outcome you require then you also need to give thought to the future, or in other words what will happen after the event. In the scenario I've just discussed, your presentation to the board meeting, following a successful outcome you may get a promotion if only to head up the implementation of your ideas. So often, in the discussion of goal setting, the focus is only on the achievement of the goal and yet, the goal is only putting a stake in the ground and it's necessary to plan beyond the point of achieving the goal. If you're speaking to a potential client when giving a presentation, then your goal and self-questions would not only focus on the presentation but the opportunities that are created after that event. Another series of questions regarding the outcomes would be the following:

- 1) What is the best outcome I expect?
- 2) What is the worst outcome I can expect?
- 3) What is the likely outcome I can expect?

Next, we need to look at the organisers of the event. Let's imagine that this time the scenario is that you've been asked to give a vote of thanks to the visitors. You need to think about the outcome or results the organisers want. Naturally they will want those who hear your vote of thanks to know that those thanks are coming from the organisers and not just from you. On many occasions I've heard votes of thanks where the proposer effectively took all the credit for the event instead of making it quite clear that the vote of thanks was on behalf of somebody else. Self-questions are probably the most powerful self-management tool in the world, so before any opportunity to stand and speak, I urge you to take the time to ask yourself a series of questions regarding the company when appropriate, the audience, the organisers, the outcome and yourself. Mark Twain once said *It usually takes me about three weeks to write a good impromptu speech* and wasn't he right? Time spent planning what you are going to say is time well used and not time wasted. So often, the nerves associated with speaking up only show their ugly heads because of lack of planning.

Here now is a superb way to create a firm plan for what you are about to say. I've used this method to prepare questions, short speeches and major presentations. It's a tried and tested and proven way to help you to put into the right order and with the right balance the areas you're going to cover. It all begins with a self-question: What do I want to cover in my speech? What do I want to cover in my presentation? What do I want to cover in the team meeting? Or whatever is appropriate. In response to this self-question which must be on paper, you simply write down everything, yes, everything your mind thinks of. At this stage of the planning process it's totally unnecessary to start editing, just let your mind answer the question. We can add creative thoughts later. It was once said *A proper plan is a grid on which you lay creativity* and isn't that true? Once you've listed an answer to your self-question of all the areas you wish to cover, then these areas need to be prioritised. This is the simple way to do it: If your list of areas is extremely long then simply go through the list and mark each one with the letter A, letter B or letter C. The code for those letters is as follows; those you mark with the letter A will be the ones you wish to include in the first third of your speech, those marked B will be in the middle and those marked C will be at the end.

Taking each chunk of areas you'll then prioritise them using what I call the *Carpet fitter's technique*. Let me share with you how I came up with this idea. Some years ago I was living in a house in Meridan in the centre of England and I decided to buy some carpets. The carpet fitter who had arrived to fit the carpets seemed somewhat old for such a physical job but he was brilliant, he was so quick and yet so accurate. Have you ever tried to fit a carpet, it's challenging isn't it? Naturally I was interested in the carpet fitter's experience and asked him the following question, "You made that look so easy, tell me do you ever get it wrong?" "No never", replied the carpet fitter. Now as you can imagine I was somewhat sceptical about his reply and asked, "Never?" His response was, "No never". In somewhat of a non-believing voice I said to him, "How do you manage to do that then?" "Well", said the carpet fitter, "We measure it twice and cut it once. That way it saves us cutting it twice if we only measure it once." Well what a fantastic idea and I've used the

idea ever since to make certain that when I had a list of items that needed to be put into order I always measured them twice and only cut them once.

This is how you do it: taking your "A" list you create three columns down the right-hand edge of the paper by drawing lines from the top to the bottom and labelling those columns one, two and three. In column three, the one on the right-hand edge, using numbers, you decide on the prioritisation on the list. Obviously the item you wish to cover at the very start of your presentation will be number one, the item you wish to cover second will be number two and so on. Once you have prioritised the list in column three then fold under the right-hand edge of the paper so you can no longer see the prioritisation you have just done. Using column two repeat the prioritisation, again, number one will be the first thing you wish to cover, number two, the second and so on. Now unfold the edge of the paper and compare the two prioritisations. Any differences you find will prompt your mind to think carefully about the order in which you wish to deliver your talk. When you've done both the prioritisation's then use column one to decide on the precise order in which you will deliver your talk. This is the process I use in order to put any action list into order. You can use the carpet fitter's technique to decide on the order for speeches, for talks, for actions to increase wealth, even actions to decorate a room. All it takes is a focused question at the top of the page followed by three columns of prioritisation. When you've done the "A" list then repeat the process with the "B" and "C" lists and you'll have the whole list of topics or areas in the right order. Well, maybe not, there are other factors to take into account now that you have the basic structure of the speech.

You now need to take into account the balance of the topics. Let me explain: you'll want a balance between the serious parts of your talk and lighter subjects. You'll need a balance between left brain logical points and right brain creative points. You'll need a balance between audience involvement areas and areas where the audience will just have to sit and listen. If your presentation is a long one and there is a break in the middle of it then you need to ensure that you end the first session on a high and have something which will immediately get people's attention as soon as they return for the second half. Now you need to take the prioritised list and look at it again, to tweak it to create the final version for balance.

Now that you are going to be speaking up on even more occasions than ever before it's important that you start to build a research library for yourself. Every time you hear a story which you know you could use in a future presentation or talk, make a note of it and file it away. Keep a specific filing system for the jokes, the humorous stories, the anecdotes and quotes you hear. However, here is an important point for you, when you hear a story which you think you could use, then after capturing the basic elements, do research to find even more facts and figures.

Some years ago at a conference in Chicago I heard a presenter tell a story about Charles Blondin, the famous tight ropewalker, it was a great story, it made a really solid point at the end of his presentation. However, when I returned to England I did some further research into the story and found out some really interesting facts and figures. You'll hear both on the quotes and stories and you'll see me deliver it on the video part of this



programme. When you have further facts, you can make the story come to life, knowing the date the event took place, knowing the numbers involved if there are any, knowing the full names of the people involved all make it easier for your audience to identify with the story and therefore the point that you're making by its use. When you hear a good story, quote or anecdote write it out in full on paper, don't type it, write out the whole story. This complete writing technique will lock the story into your mind. Here is another lesson in story telling, one I didn't learn until a few years ago when I was told this by a friend who presented regularly. When you first hear the story don't immediately go and tell someone else the story, however tempted you may be to share this new great idea. If you do this is what happens: you act as the conduit, simply the cognate for the message and you'll probably find, as I've found, that the story doesn't get internalised. If you hold from telling that story for just a few days and repeat it to yourself a number of times then you'll find you've made it your own. Jokes and stories are all about practice and timing. Practising just to yourself is a great way to get that timing absolutely smack on.

Let me give you some more ideas on research sources. First of course these days there is the Internet, if you need a story or information on any subject, you'll probably be able to find it on the Internet. Of course, information about the Internet changes on a daily basis. I've found that one of the best ways to access or search for information on the Internet is to use a search engine called Alta Vista, translation facilities are also available. It will certainly pay dividends for you to increase your knowledge and skill in searching the Internet; these days I find it to be my major source of stories, quotes and information. The next reference source is obviously an Encyclopaedia and of course, these are available on CD-ROM with search facilities, which are so user friendly that again it is possible to find fascinating information, which can be blended into your talk or speech. Another essential resource facility which you'll need is a quote book. My personal favourites are *Bloomsbury's Dictionary of Quotations*, *The Speaker's Library of Business Stories, Anecdotes and Humour* by Joe Griffith and *Peter's Quotations* by Lawrence Peter. The right quote used at the right time can really add to the power of your message, it's as though the author of the quote is in total agreement with your argument. Always make certain though that wherever possible you credit the original author of the quote or story. *The Book of Dates* is also very useful; however, it can be almost too structured to use the date as the basis of your talk. In the same way as the idea has been so overused, I would suggest that a dictionary definition of key word, which is the basis of your speech, should be avoided. Yes, you can use dictionary definitions but don't use them too often. Newspapers, TV and radio are obviously also great sources for good information and if you are able to find something in the day's newspaper which is totally relevant to the talk or speech you're giving this can be a great way to enliven a presentation.

Perhaps one of the best sources of research is your own experience. There will be many stories, happenings and humorous events from your own life which can be personalised, and from my own experience I know they are often the best stories. Let me give you an example of that immediately. This is exactly how I'd tell the story in a talk or presentation. Some months ago I was driving the youngest of my four sons to

school, it was a dark and dreary day and the rain was falling. My son, David, turned to me and said,

“Dad, what a miserable day”. I responded to him by saying,

“David, what’s your favourite food?” and as he was only seven years old at the time he said,

“Burgers”!

“Great”, I said, “Where do burgers come from?” I had hoped he would say cows but he responded enthusiastically with,

“Macdonald’s”!

“Yes, David I know Macdonald’s but which animal do we get burgers from?”

“Well Dad they’re made of beef so it’s from cows.”

“You’re right”, I said “And what do cows have to eat to make them big and strong?”

“Grass!” was his instant reply,

“Great! And what do we need apart from the sunshine to make the grass grow?”.

Suddenly the light went on in his mind.

“Rain”, he said.

“Yes”, I smiled. “And so you know what that means don’t you? When it rains, it means we get more burgers.” He thought it was a great idea and couldn’t wait to tell all his friends at school what his Dad had said. At home that evening I asked what he’d said at school.

“Well Dad I told them the story and they thought it was funny.” Over time I’ve been able to reframe a number of things for him based on this story and of course the point is that you and I can reframe or reposition anything in our minds. We can either think that something is a failure or simply a result from which we learn something. If a seven-year-old is able to look on a rainy day as having some real benefit, then surely anyone can do the same with the rainy days of business or life.

Now to the point I’m sure is the key, it must be a true story to add real impact to what you have to say, and provided that you tell it in the right way and to the right audience then you’ll also build massive rapport with that group. So, as thoughts come to you and experiences are recalled make notes then of these stories so you’re able to use them when the appropriate occasion arises. The majority of stories I use are adaptations of the things that have actually happened to me.

It’s essential to have a good dictionary and thesaurus as finding appropriate words and unusual words can, in the right circumstances, really make a difference. Of course, you need to be careful with your choice of words and the purpose of the dictionary is not to find things that will confuse your audience, rather, words that will improve your message. Other resources would be the *Guinness Book of Records*, other speakers and audio tapes. The real key to a research library is the filing of information, it’s obviously little use having a fund of brilliant and witty stories only to be unable to find them when they’re needed. Invest in bookshelves, if like me, at times you have books lying about the place and set up a filing system for your stories and experiences. The additional things always to have to hand are a notebook and a pen, or a dictating machine (the hand held variety); I keep a dictaphone in my briefcase and one in my car. When a story or thought or idea comes to mind then I capture the idea immediately knowing that if I leave it I probably won’t recall it later when I do need it. *Proper Planning Prevents*

*Particularly Poor Performance*, is reportedly an FBI expression. Whoever came up with it and I've heard it credited to some many different organisations and people, it's still a great expression. So with that in mind, as we continue to discuss planning, let's look at planning time.

On the day that you give a speech or presentation, even if to a social gathering such as a wedding, there will be time constraints. Nothing is worse than a best man that who perceives that his function is not only to provide a little light relief at the wedding breakfast, not only to thank the groom for his toast to the bridesmaids but thinks that he has to become the cabaret and the comedian for the rest of the day. Timing is important in so many different ways, so, when we think about the amount of time you're going to be speaking for, you'll need to include it in your planning by your practise of a self-question that really says, "Have I got the right amount of material? "

Let's say you've been allocated a ten-minute slot to explain your market research department's activity at a company's sales conference. So, you now know you only have ten minutes to get over the whole message, not much time, especially if you are expected to include a Q&A (*a question and answer*) session as well. So, how much material do you need for ten minutes? Let me give you a clear guideline. I know that for my stuff, particularly audio programmes when I use a script for the recording of the programmes (sometimes I do and sometimes I don't), I'll need one page of A4 paper typed in twelve-point font size for every two and a half to three minutes of speaking time. Let me repeat that. I'll need one page of A4 typed paper in twelve-point font size for every two and a half to three minutes of speaking time. This page of type will only have large paragraphs and spoken punctuation in bold: colons, commas, underlining and, perhaps my favourite, the ellipsis or three dots. You can easily experiment with this. Take something you've written before, change the font size to twelve-point and reduce the normal spacing, so the page is full of type and then time how long it takes you to read it out at the pace you'd use live. Remember, that you'll probably speak either slightly faster or slightly slower on the day, faster possibly if you're a little concerned and slower if that's your natural style or if you're slowing down to make a particular point. Make the practice as realistic as possible. If you have visual aids to use in the presentation that may also use some time as you change slides or move an acetate or write on a flipchart or move back to your computer to press *page down* on your PowerPoint presentation.

Here is a critical point and one that many people judging by my experience have not considered, it's this. It is highly unlikely in most circumstances that the audience will know precisely what you're going to cover. Yes, you'll give them some idea in your introduction and I'll cover introductions for you later on. However, they won't know exactly what you're going to say, so, they won't know if you miss something out or add something in. In the preparation stage of your talk, therefore, you'll need to give thought to what can be left out if it seems that you will overrun your allotted time or what you might add in if you find that you've used up your time too quickly. Very often previous speakers at a meeting or conference are not so good at keeping to the timing of the event and if you're speaking later in the day, you may find that your

twenty minute presentation will go right out of the window as the organiser apologetically asks you if you could cut your talk to just ten minutes. It happens regularly. So, what can you leave out and what can you add in? I always have a fund of stories and exercises that I can use if I feel the timing is going array. Whilst we're on this point, let me give you another key thought. There are times in presentations for whatever reason that the audience can drift off. This might be because it's late, they've had a drink or it's not long after they've eaten, the air conditioning isn't working or the seats are uncomfortable or perhaps too comfortable.

For whatever reason there are times when you can lose the audience and it can be a challenging experience. Perhaps the content you're delivering is above or below them, perhaps they know the subject so well that they're bored, whatever the reason you must have a back up story or anecdote or interactive something that will grab their attention again. This is the one I use. Its called *geometric testing* and I first heard it on a seminar many years ago. The presenter used it as her opening and it worked extremely well. This is how it goes. Again I'll deliver it to you as though I was saying it at a presentation. If you have a flip chart you'd draw these shapes on the paper, if not, simply ask the audience to imagine the shapes or draw them on their pads. By the way and I'll give you the full background on this later, don't say can you imagine these shapes, say

"You can imagine these shapes". Not *can you, you can*, this is a command, not a request. So, on with the story you can imagine these shapes, ... "a triangle, a circle, a square, an oblong and a squiggly line. That's a triangle, a circle, a square, an oblong and a squiggly line. Now what I want you to do is to pick one of those shapes, it may be something you doodle when you are on the phone, it may be your body shape or may well be just the one you like best. Pick one now, and draw it or write it on your pad or think about it. That's a triangle, a circle, a square, an oblong or a squiggly line. This is called geometric testing. Hands up all the triangles. OK. Hands up all the circles. Let's see where the squares are and now, by the way there aren't usually many of these, have we got any oblongs here today? OK and now please note these people where our squiggly lines are?" So now you've had everyone in the audience put up their hands, particularly if you put up your hand every time you asked a group to do so. It's very difficult to be negative, to have your arms crossed and put up your hand at the same time. So, back to the example, now you'd say,

"Could all the triangles put up their hands again so we know who they are. These are the leaders in the community, these are the people heading for the top. Just look at the shape they've chosen - you can see where they are going. If you have to deal with these people then give them two choices and ask them to make a decision. These people are forthright and know their own minds. That's right you triangles, isn't it?" Ah! They'll always answer yes to that question. You'll certainly have one part of the audience on your side at this point and of course everyone else in the audience is now dying to know what the shape they've picked really means. This is a real attention grabber,

"Hands up the circles, the circles are people-people. These people are great with other people and make excellent managers" (Usually a few groans from the audience at this.) "However, they're the devil to manage as they don't like to implement things which they think will be bad for their people, the circles, the people-people. Now for the squares, hands up you squares. These are our detail people, they are usually, though

not always very good with detail. They like to put things in a box, they want to know the edges. That's right isn't it, you squares?" If at this point and it usually, by the way, is at this point that you get an odd person shaking their head, simply say "Ah! One person doesn't feel they're a square, they're the exception to the rule, which must prove the rest of this stuff is right. Now what about the oblongs, as I've said there aren't many oblongs in life, these are the people who have a change happening in their life, it may be commercial or it may be social, maybe perhaps they are even thinking of changing their jobs." (This will usually raise a laugh.)

I was once speaking as the after dinner speaker at a charity event which was held in the officers' mess of an RAF station, a Royal Air Force station I was due to speak for about thirty minutes about 9.30pm, after the coffee, loyal toast and the majority of the toasts had been given. Due to the late serving of the dinner and various other things, I didn't stand to speak until 11.00pm. You can imagine that many of the audience, whilst sober, had certainly had a few drinks, there was a lot of toasting going on and as it was late people were getting tired, so ditching my planned opening, I launched straight into geometric testing. It was great, everyone woke up or sobered to hear the explanation of the shape they'd picked. Perhaps the really strange thing was this, the Station Master was retiring, that was certainly a change in his life after many, many years in the RAF and he'd picked the oblong. Strange isn't it, how these things seem to work?

Anyway, back to the explanations. Now finally

"Where are our squiggly lines? Please note these people, these people are the crazy people or the nutters." By the way, *nutters* works well in the U.K, but doesn't work at all in the States, I had to quickly say *crazy people* when I saw the blank looks on the faces of one American audience when I said the word *nutters*. This will raise a real laugh and you continue with,

"Yes, these are in fact the creative people, the people who write the verses in humorous greetings cards. If you have squiggly lines in your team, don't mix them with the boxes, they'll contaminate them. The squiggly lines are the party people and great to have around." You can imagine how well this works. I've used it in the most formal of settings and in the most informal of settings, it works well everywhere. So there is *geometric testing* which, with practice, is a great way to use time if you've used your material too quickly or a brilliant way to bring back an audience you may have lost through perhaps no fault of your own.

Now, let's look at the time you'll need for planning, writing and practising. There are a number of areas for which you'll need to allocate time, and as you might expect, these things usually take a little longer than we imagine. So, allocate time for the following:

- 1) The basic plan - Such things as answering a series of focused questions you've asked yourself regarding the outcome, the audience, the organisers, the company, the event.
- 2) Listing the subjects or areas you'll cover.
- 3) Prioritisation of the A, B and C lists.
- 4) Checking the balance.
- 5) Research for additional stories and information.

- 6) Possibly mind mapping the script (I'll cover mind mapping when I give some information on actually how to write the script).
- 7) Writing the script.
- 8) Preparing or designing the visuals.
- 9) Timing the script.
- 10) Practising.

By allocating time for all of these areas well in advance of the speech or talk you have to give, you'll know that you are as well planned as you can possibly be. That knowledge alone will help you deliver a great speech and eradicate any nerves created by the feeling that you're not sure what you're going to say.

Now, let's move on and look at how you'll create a theme for your presentation. The theme or central idea of what you have to say will create a glue which will firstly, stick all the ideas together and secondly, give the audience a framework on which to hang their memory of what you've said. All professional speakers use themes for this reason and I seem to see and hear even more people using this idea ... politicians talking about *keeping a straight bat*, business people talking about *getting to first base* and many other examples. Here are a number of ideas you could use as a theme:

- 1) People – You could pick people in your own company and using each one or their departments weave a story regarding your topic. You could use members of the royal family and describe each one and how they are relevant to the sections of your talk e.g.: you may talk about leadership using the Queen, the problems associated with staff using Sarah Ferguson or Prince Charles, and the media's relationship with the Royals as you expand to talk about Public relations. You could use the members of a pop group and use analogies about music; in fact, any group of people who are well known to your audience will create an instant link. Let me make an important point here, if you should get groans from the audience as you make puns which link into your theme, be pleased, the groans are only the audience members' way of showing appreciation of a good pun.
- 2) Sports – Sports make a great theme providing the audience members are into sport. Using basketball to an audience which has no interest in or knowledge of the sport would alienate the audience immediately. If you're determined to press on even when you know the audience won't understand all the analogies you use, then make certain that you explain the rules of the sport or make it clear how your theme relates to the audience. As a keen golfer myself, I often use golf analogies, talking about such things as the fairways of life, the bunkers of adversity and the pleasures of the 19<sup>th</sup> hole. I sometimes use the golf score card when I talk about goal setting, making the connection that you have to keep your score along the way as well as the total score at the end. Football, cricket, motor racing, field sports and any sport you can think of are all useful themes.
- 3) Change – This can make a great theme. Using such expressions, as *The only constant in life is change* really focuses the audience's minds on change.
- 4) History – History provides some great stories, taking perhaps the exploits of a famous adventurer.
- 5) Films – Well known films where everyone is aware of the plot can definitely be used.

- 6) The stages of life – From the cradle to the grave can easily give people a framework through which they'll know where you're going. Perhaps as importantly, know when you're coming to the end of your talk.
- 7) Jigsaw puzzle – This makes a great visual theme as each of the pieces fall into place. I've seen this used by a professional presenter and it was extremely effective. It has a number of advantages and it's obvious where the speech is going. The pictures of the jigsaw can be low lighted before they're talked about and then highlighted once they've been covered. It gives real structure to the presentation and as with the cradle to the grave example, the audience knows when the end is nigh.
- 8) A journey – a brilliant way to have a theme for what you have to say. Explain in your introduction about the journey you're going to take with the audience and tell them early on the stages of the journey and the end point. You could use a journey to the moon and talk about the planning stage, the preparations, the training, the financing, the launch, the flight, the landing, the planting of the flag and the journey home with splash down in the Pacific Ocean.
- 9) A professional career – Perhaps talking about a doctor and how they were trained. Private practice or General Practitioner.
- 10) Food – This makes a fabulous theme, you could use the various courses of a meal, starting with the aperitif, moving on to the starter, then the soup course, the main course and its constituent parts, the dessert, the coffee, the liqueurs and of course talking about the wines and water which accompany the meal. Food can also be the theme if you use the making of a cake or something similar, describing the ingredients and how they relate to your talk, explaining the importance of each part and making the connection that each of your team members has their part to play as without every ingredient the cake simply doesn't taste the way it should.
- 11) Computers – Everyone in business today uses a computer and therefore everyone is quite comfortable with the idea of hardware and software. Certain computer programs can make great themes.
- 12) Holidays – Planning a holiday is very similar to planning a business process and this can make a great connection in the audience's mind. Everyone listening will have taken a holiday at some time in their lives, and therefore will easily be able to associate your ideas of holiday planning. One of the reasons why a theme is so important is that it aids retention of the ideas that you've explained. If you make a firm link between each idea and something already known by those who'll hear you, then they will be able to retain and easily recall that information.
- 13) A deck of cards – Again a brilliant theme. There are so many connections: the four suits, the thirteen cards in each suit, the picture cards, the jokers in the pack, the wild cards, perhaps even a card game and how it is played out. You may recall the song by Wink Martindale, *Deck of Cards*, where he used it to tell a story.
- 14) Anachronism – Which is a word formed from the initial letters of other words, or an acrostic, which is a poem or similar writing where the first or last letters of each line form a word or words. Both can be used, in fact I use a couple of anachronisms myself. However, take a great deal of care with this as they're very often used and by this overuse can create negative feelings. The word *Smart* is used in goal setting standing for: *Specific, Measurable, Action, Recordable and Time*. I use my first name *Peter* in goal setting exercises to stand for: *Precise, Exciting, Truthful, Action-orientated and Recordable* but use them with care.

- 15) Books – If there's a book you think the audience will know, it can be used.
- 16) Money – Now, this does work well, you can use coins and notes in ever increasing amounts to make a really good story.
- 17) The World – Obviously so many opportunities with this theme: continents, countries, capitals, language, seas, oceans, the list is almost endless.
- 18) TV programmes – Particularly well known soap operas.
- 19) Radio programmes.
- 20) A building project – Using such ideas as preparing the site, digging the foundations, building the walls, planning for light, gas and water, putting in the windows, decorating, the roof and of course, the topping out ceremony.

Well there are a number of ideas to get you thinking. The purpose of theme is to let the audience know what you'll be talking about, to give a framework in which they can think about what you're saying. To enable you to use gentle humour with puns and clearly signal the ending. Used effectively, themes really do provide the glue which sticks your whole presentation together.

If I hear it I remember about 5%, if I see it I remember about 25% and if I do it I'll remember it forever. I think we would both agree that TV advertising is far more powerful and effective than radio advertising, it's certainly more expensive. Perhaps, so, because it tends to reach a larger audience but also because it works better, the advertisers get a better result. So, if you want people to remember what you say then the best way is to involve them in the process, or if this is not possible then certainly visual aids will be needed. So, let's look, appropriate word, let's look at the planning aspect of visual aids. The type of visual aid you'll need will depend on how many you're speaking to. I'll go into much greater detail in the visual aid section later, but for now let's concentrate our thoughts on the planning aspect. The visual aids must be absolutely appropriate to the occasion; you have number of choices of the various types you can use:

- 1) None at all.
- 2) Handouts.
- 3) Flipchart.
- 4) Overhead projector.
- 5) Slides.
- 6) Computer generated presentation, such as PowerPoint, that can be front lit or back lit.
- 7) Physical items.
- 8) A pretend person.
- 9) You.

Here are the key things you'll need to think about when it comes to planning the use of your visuals.

- 1) Will you need visuals at all? If you're going to ask a question at a meeting, perhaps not, although if you had an appropriate item to show then you might make your point more effectively, e.g. a research document or a report or a magazine article



which you refer to might add substance to what you have to say and the question you're asking.

- 2) Handouts – If you're going to be giving handouts, you'll need to plan to give them out before you speak or after you've spoken. The challenge with giving the handouts out first, is that people will read them and this may spoil the impact of some of the things you want to say. If you decide to use handouts, you'll need to plan and allow planning time for the creation of the handouts. Will you use pictures in the handouts? Will they be bound together? Will you put your name and contact details in them? Will you use a response mechanism for anyone who wants more details from you? And here's a key thought for you, if you're giving out bound handouts and have decided to have them spiral bound, then you can create a really great response from your audience by having some of the booklets bound on the right-hand edge rather than the left-hand edge and of course for use by left-handed people. I do this with workbooks I use on my in-house and open seminars and the reaction from the audience is fantastic! It shows that proper planning has really taken place. For fun I also have one bound on both sides and then make the point, using someone in the company or people from a particular company, that I have prepared a special one for them bound on both sides as they already have all the answers. This goes down very well and as it's at the start of the presentation, it's a great icebreaker.
- 3) Do you want your handouts to just be a copy of the slides you're using? If so – then if you want people to take notes use three slides per page. If you do this there is then a space for notes. In PowerPoint if you do that, there is a print option to print three slides per page with lines for notes at the side of each slide representation.
- 4) Flipcharts – If you decide to use a flipchart in your talk then you may wish to prepare graphs, pictures and words on your flipchart. If you do so, make a note on your speech notes as to when you need to turn the flipchart page. Also with flipcharts you'll need pens. Do not rely on the organisers, the hotel, the training department or anyone else to have the flipchart pens. Buy your own and take them with you. I'd strongly recommend that you use chisel-tipped flipchart pens, they're great to write and enable you to use different line thicknesses. If you need to take your own flipchart, collapsible flipcharts are easily available. Plan for how much paper you'll need, nothing is more embarrassing than running out of flipchart paper in the middle of a presentation.
- 5) The OHP (Overhead projector). – This is a great tool, but can be distracting as the mirror of the projector has to stand in line with the screen, so if you decide to use an OHP, planning needs to take place. Will you take your own or rely on someone else's? How many acetates will you need? Will you be responsible for carrying a spare bulb? What will you do if the OHP breaks down and believe me they do! I've had it happen in the middle of a whole-day seminar. It was in the summer, the air-conditioning was on high and in one of the breaks, the coldness of the air created condensation in the OHP and blew the bulb, the spare had also blown on a previous occasion. The only choice, keep going!
- 6) Slides – It seems that very few people are using slides. What with laptops and the ease of projection, it seems that slides have probably had their day. If you do use slides, then plan where the changes are to be made and make a note in your notes as to where those changes will take place.

- 7) Computer generated graphics – This really is the way forward when it comes to visuals, they're easy to design, easy to change and easy to use. In the planning stage, give thought to how many images you need, given the amount of time you'll be speaking for. If you have too many then you'll find you're rushing them through to make sure you don't overrun. Less is better than more. Planning means making certain that you have the necessary leads to connect the laptop or the computer to the projector or if you're only supplying a disk on your presentation that the computer which is being used can accept your format. Always, always check and plan to send that disk to whoever is in charge of the computer, a number of days before the day on which you will be speaking.
- 8) Physical items – These can be brilliant and they can be disastrous. I've seen presentations where the use of the physical items was so childish that the audience 'negged' out immediately and I've seen presentations where the simplest of physical things have made a real impact. Be extremely careful in planning to use objects, make certain that they fit very well into what you're going to say.
- 9) A pretend person – This can make a really interesting visual aid, talking to another person who isn't actually there is very powerful stuff. At the planning stage you'll need to allow for a great deal of time to practice.
- 10) You – You are probably the best prop and the best visual aid you have. As we have discussed before, plan what you will wear. As with everything you do with your talk, or speech or presentation, the planning and practice of the visuals will give you confidence. Confidence to perform on the day.

Now occasionally in life, we have the opportunity or challenge thrust upon us to stand and speak up for ourselves without much warning. This could be in business when suddenly someone is taken ill or doesn't appear and you're selected as the lucky person to deliver their material. It may be that an opportunity arises from a discussion that's taken place and now a response is needed to staff members' concerns right in the middle of a meeting when you didn't know you were likely to be speaking. What to do? Panic? No, there is no need for panic. A few moments, yes, just a few moments of planning will enable you to stand and speak up with confidence. All you need to do is to ask yourself a number of key questions. Once you have this list firmly embedded in your mind, or perhaps written on a piece of paper that you can keep with you, then you're ready to stand and speak anywhere, any time, any place. Here they are:

- 1) What one question is likely to be in the minds of the audience members, which I can answer?
- 2) What one thing do I have in common with the audience on which I can speak?
- 3) What is the most relevant thing I know which the audience would like to know?
- 4) My old standby number 4, the six stage process. You can use this for anything, to plan your life, to achieve your goals and even give an impromptu talk. Here it is, based on the power of questions I've mentioned to you before. Your mind will always give you answers to these questions if you ask.
  - a) Where are they now?
  - b) How did they get there?
  - c) Where are they going?
  - d) Why do they want to go there?

- e) What are the likely obstacles or problems they have?
- f) What are the actions that need to be taken?

Another version would be this:

- a) Where is the company now?
- b) How did it get here?
- c) Where is it going?
- d) Why does it want to go there?
- e) What are the obstacles?
- f) What are the actions that need to be taken?

Or even on a personal front where obviously you'd use the word *I*, where am I now etc., you can see and hear how useful this six stage questioning process is, can't you? Let's say that you've suddenly been asked at a board meeting to give a summary of your department's activities and you are in charge of let's say customer service. The six-stage process is perfect as a framework for your explanation; you can talk about your department's current performance giving details of staff numbers and performance measurement. You can talk about the problems of the past, which have been overcome. You can give your vision of the future and explain why in the overall scheme of the company's future the achievement of that vision is essential, you can probably talk at length of the challenges which will face you and your team and then finish by explaining exactly what you're going to do to ensure that your vision is achieved, it's so simple.

Now, if you have to deliver someone else's material or speech and you have the flexibility to say it in your own words then use the six stage process and select from their notes the key ideas which will fit. You'll almost certainly find that without knowing it consciously the other speaker will have used some of the basic idea. If not, and you have to deliver the talk exactly from their notes, then this is what to do. When you talk look at the audience, when you read don't look at the audience, too simple? Let me say it again, when you speak you must be looking at the audience, when you read you won't be. Now although this sounds so simple, it's actually rather difficult to master to start with, but like everything in life, practice will improve your skill. When you're speaking normally just in conversation, you'll notice that you don't always speak in complete sentences. You use lots of pauses and silences. It can be the same when you read from a written script. Just look down, grab a few words in your mind off the page, look up and say them, then look down again, grab the next few words, look up and say them. That's it! With practice you'll find that this sounds extremely natural, so here's a thought for you. Really listen the next time you hear people in conversation, you'll realise how they phrase their words. You'll realise that they do speak in short bursts.

Finally in this section, let's look at introductions. There is a very simple formula for introductions. You can use this if you have to introduce someone or to create your own introduction, which you give to someone who is going to introduce you. The introduction is a very important part of speaking up. How many times have you been at a company meeting or presentation of some description when the MC (Master of ceremonies) or the previous speaker introduced the next person by saying something

along the lines of *Let's now welcome Tony who'll talk to you about market research.*

Obviously this introduction only starts to prompt questions in the mind ... Who is Tony? What's his position? What does he know about this? What's he done in this area that makes him able to talk about it? What's his connection with today's events? So the answers to those questions are the basic content of an introduction. Seven stage process:

- 1) Who are you?
- 2) What do you do?
- 3) What's your experience in this area?
- 4) Why should I believe you?
- 5) What's your connection with the event?
- 6) What are you going to talk about?
- 7) How long will you be talking?

Isn't that easy? So if you have to introduce someone, ask them those questions and use the answers to plan and write the introduction. If you're going to be introduced then answer those questions yourself and give your typed introduction to whoever is going to perform that function. If you don't give people your introduction then you're leaving it to chance and heaven knows what they might say. Some years ago, I was running a seminar in Self-development and one of the delegates was particularly keen on the message I was putting forward and he asked me to run a series of in-house courses for his staff. On the first of these I was going to speak for the whole day to his sales team, the man in question asked if it was OK if he introduced me. I said yes, as he'd been on one of my seminars, I knew that he understood what I'd be covering with his sales team. I didn't give him my typed introduction, mistake! He spent the first twenty minutes, yes, twenty minutes of the seminar telling his sales team what a no good lazy bunch of so and so's they were, how lucky they were to have a job and how I was the man who was going to change their lives forever! You can imagine it can't you? Well, my fault! I should have insisted that the man use my standard introduction or at least discuss with him what we going to say. When he left the room having introduced me there was stunned silence. How did I get round it? Well I was able to explain in colourful and vivid language that I felt we'd got started on the wrong foot. Make certain that you take the time to plan and write an introduction for yourself.

So, that's planning, perhaps the area missed by most people who say they're nervous about speaking. Remember planning is as essential to success as the old trite expression says, *if you fail to plan, you plan to fail*, and this applies to a five-minute presentation to your team as much as it does to a whole-day training session you might deliver to thousands. So *Plan everything, then everything will go to plan!*

Let me briefly summarise what we've covered together in this section. We've looked at: being aware of the results we want from our speaking opportunities; the carpet fitters technique for prioritisation of areas and creating balance; research – collecting stories and information to enliven your speeches; planning the amount of time you'll need to plan, to research, to write, to practice and deliver what you want to say; planning what can be left out and what can be added in, including geometric testing; planning a theme for the talk; planning visual aids if you're going to use them at all and if so planning

their use; what to do when you're suddenly called on to speak including the simple six-stage process; and introductions, making certain that you have a planned introduction.

Let me finish this section by reminding you of the quotes I've used:

*If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.*

*It usually takes me about three weeks to write a good impromptu speech.*

*A proper plan is the grid on which you lay creativity.*

*Proper planning prevents particularly poor performance.*

*Plan everything, then everything will go to plan!*

The reason most people state as being why they do not like speaking up on most occasions is fear, or often said as *I'm nervous about speaking in public*, and by speaking in public, the speaker means in front of just a few people or perhaps in front of many, and it is understandable in some ways that these nerves should be felt. However, when these nerves prevent action then something must, I repeat must, be done to stop them. For if it isn't done then many, many opportunities throughout life for advancement, success, wealth and happiness, will be lost. So, this next section will deal with nerves. What causes nerves? The symptoms which are displayed and the numerous ways to overcome them. By the time you've listened to this section, the knowledge alone will make you confident about expressing your opinions and getting up to speak, and with your repeated listening and action with the ideas, you will feel extremely confident to speak on any occasion. After you have internalised these ideas, I don't know how much better you'll feel about yourself, I don't know how much more successful you'll become, I don't even know how soon you'll find yourself standing and speaking. What I do know is that those people who've experienced these ideas say to me, "Peter, these ideas are very simple, very easy to put in practise and make me feel so confident". Some years ago I recorded a two-cassette programme on this very subject and a report came back to me by the training manager of a large hotel group and it was this, she said to me, "Peter, I've listened to the tapes and I don't know why, I can't put my finger on the specific words you said but now I actually look forward to speaking."

So, let's go through this important topic together now, and start by discussing the symptoms of nerves. As I go through them, I'll give you some simple remedies and then later we'll get into some really powerful techniques to stop them happening altogether. Everybody gets butterflies, the trick is to get them to fly in formation. Dry mouth is a common symptom of nerves and yes, it can be a real problem. I've certainly experienced having a dry mouth and it's a real nuisance, you can't speak properly, the audience whoever they are, can actually spot when a speakers mouth has gone dry and constant lip licking is a real give-away. The simple remedy is to have a glass of water handy, and take a sip before you start and further sips if you feel your mouth is drying up. Part of your planning stage will be to ensure that you do have a glass and a bottle of

water, handy. Let me give you a tip here from my own experience, before the event whatever that may be, pour a glass of water for yourself. I remember one occasion, many years ago when standing to speak I was nervous, my mouth was dry, I asked the audience to answer a question on their writing pads to give myself a few moments to pour some water. However, because I was nervous my hands were shaking slightly and it was difficult to pour the water without spilling it. I learnt my lesson. Ever since I've poured myself a glass of water before speaking, though now I seldom need it. Shaking knees, most people who have spoken in public have experienced knocking or shaking knees and I've seen someone so nervous when she stood to speak that you could see her trembling and it looked as if she might even fall over. The instant remedy is either to sit down, this could be on high stool or chair, or stand behind a lectern. This is not a good long-term solution, but a simple remedy. Similarly, shaking hands can be a dead give-away that nerves are playing their unwanted part. The easiest way to avoid your hands shaking is to avoid holding pieces of paper which indicate the problem, putting your notes on a Lectern, table or chair is a much better option, if you're concerned that your hands will shake. Having your notes on 3"x5" cards is also a great idea, as cards are less likely to shake as you can hold them totally in one hand unlike larger pieces of paper which can flap all over the place.

Many actors and singers have reported their problems of nerves manifesting themselves as sickness and upset stomach prior to their performances. Leo Sayer, it is said, was physically sick before every performance. It may well be and this will become more apparent when we discuss anchoring, that it created a mind set that said to him if you're not sick, you're not nervous and if you're not nervous, you won't give it your best shot. By this programme he'd installed in his mind, he ensured that he would be physically sick every time.

Sweating or perspiring is also a sign of nerves and this can be quite a problem because it can be seen. Some of the nervous signs such as increased pulse or butterflies in the stomach can't be noticed, however, sweating is there to be seen by everyone. Here are a couple of quick remedies. Don't wear anything that will show signs of sweating, e.g. a blue blouse or shirt will clearly indicate damp patches, a white blouse or shirt won't. Have a clean handkerchief with which to wipe your brow but use it sparingly, and whenever possible, when the audience's attention is focused elsewhere. Let's say you're holding a team meeting and the room is warm, the day is hot and you're slight nervousness have all made you start to perspire. Let's imagine there are about forty people in the room sitting in classroom fashion in front of you. You aren't on a stage of any kind; just standing at the front alongside an overhead projector which is also blowing hot air at you. Well, this is what to do. Put up the next acetate and as you talk about it walk towards the back of the room still talking, you'll need to increase your volume as by this time you are towards the back now facing away from most of the people, and those in front won't be able to hear you easily unless you speak up. When you get to the back, everyone will still be looking at the screen. Keep talking using such words as, *as you can see on the screen ...* This will keep everyone looking forward. Then take your handkerchief, wipe your brow and walk to the front. This way no one will even know you've done it.

Blushing is a sure sign of nervousness ... what to do. Well if you blush on the top of your chest as some people do then wear something that doesn't show the top of your chest, if you blush in the cheeks then make-up may be one solution. Sometimes nerves manifest themselves as clumsiness, tripping up or down stairs, bumping into the lectern or table the remedy - slow down! Take it easy! Move slowly. One of the clear demonstrations of nerves is gripping the lectern until the knuckles turn white, this can also happen if the speaker is angry. The remedy is to hold on to the lectern, but be aware of the grip you are using; simple awareness will in many cases eradicate the problem. Finally in symptoms, loss of concentration or recall. This is where proper planning and proper notes will help. If you lose your place then having key word notes or cards, which I'll cover the writing of later, will be the solution.

Now, let's look at the causes of those nerves, and again as we go through them I'll suggest some simple remedies and solutions and after we've covered this part, we'll get into the techniques of nerve control. Fear, yes, fear is the major cause of nerves, fear of embarrassment, fear of making a fool of ourselves, fear of all sorts of things. Let's look at these fears, one by one, and dispel as many as possible. Here is a tip for you; if you're fearful at the prospect of speaking up then analysing those fears, as we're about to do now is the way to get rid of them. Why?

Because when we analyse the fears, we usually find that there isn't that much to fear. If I don't cover a fear you have felt then use the same process, list your fears and analyse them. It's often been said that fear stands for *False Evidence Appearing Real*, or *Face it, Evaluate it, Analyse it and Reject it*. Good thought! Often the fear of speaking up is before the event, and not during the event. Everyone who has ever mastered the art of standing and speaking up will have gone through the fears of speaking. Now, those people may still have some nerves or adrenaline burn as I like to call it, but they don't have nerves or any sign of nervousness whilst they're performing, standing and speaking. So, now their fears, diminished though they are, are before the event and not during the event. This is good. This is the stage to get to, some prior feeling that you wish to give of your best, which may manifest itself as a few butterflies but the total disappearance of any nervous symptoms or demonstrations, once you start to speak.

So, fears, embarrassment, this is the major concern - that we'll feel embarrassed when we stand to speak. Let's analyse that. Embarrassment about what? Here are nine possible areas:

- 1) Appearance.
- 2) Making a fool of ourselves.
- 3) Drying up.
- 4) Shaking.
- 5) Being found out that we're not perfect after all.
- 6) Lack of knowledge.
- 7) That people will judge us.
- 8) Losing the audience.
- 9) Equipment failure.

So, let's look at those in some greater detail. Appearance, well we've talked about clothing and you know what clothing would be appropriate to the situation in which you have to speak up. If your appearance is your shape or size or hairstyle then you have a choice: if you think your shape or size would embarrass you then either change them, a pretty simplistic attitude Peter, I know but, or realise that other people are less likely to judge you by how you look once those first few sentences have been uttered. If you have the right words and you say them in the right way, people will start to really listen to you and any previous judgement, as I've talked about before, that they may have of you will diminish, though not disappear.

Making a fool of ourselves – Well, the way to overcome this is to go through a three-stage process of analysis: What's the worst thing that could happen? What's the best thing that could happen? What's likely to happen? When you answer these questions on paper and really understand for yourself that the likely outcome is what will happen, then your fear of making a fool of yourself will soon evaporate. Let me look at an example: you have to stand to give a brief speech at a family party so, what's the worst thing that could happen? You totally dry up and every member of your family bursts into fits of laughter at your discomfort, you trip over your own feet and fall on your face and nobody says a word, the whole place goes deathly quiet. Highly, unlikely isn't it? OK, so what's the best thing that could happen? Well, you stand and everyone stops talking and looks at you expectantly, you say what you have to say with poise, humour and confidence, everyone is totally enthralled by what you have to say. They laugh at your jokes and applaud loudly when you finish. After you've spoken, for the rest of the evening, family are talking to you and congratulating you on your performance.

"I didn't know you could speak like that, that was great!"

"Wow! No wonder you do so well in business when you speak so eloquently". Won't that be great? So with these two possible outcomes in mind, what's likely to happen? You know you'll get by, OK maybe to start with you're a little nervous, however, as you continue to speak, everyone will listen and will want you to do well. They will clap at the end and people will say how well you've done. Through this analysis you know that you should do it, you'll enjoy it and it will be a demonstration of your ability to do things that some other people can't do. You'll feel pleased with yourself and even more confident that next time you'll enjoy those speaking opportunities. You look forward to speaking, I know this is true, I've seen it happen time and time and time again.

Drying up: we can be concerned that we will dry up, that our marvellous minds will for once desert us. The way around this is to be properly prepared. Know what you have to say and have practised it to the point where you can say it without having to think too hard. By the way, over-practice is as bad as no practice. Having note cards or a written version of what you want to say will also help. If you lose your place and I've lost count of the times I've just, well lost my place, just pause, no one will think it strange that you've paused. Pauses take place in normal speech, just pause, look at your notes, find where you are and say *The next important point is ...*and go on with what you want to say. Prefixing it with *the next important point is* gives a reason for the pause. Planning is the key!



Shaking: well this certainly is something we could be embarrassed about but I've covered this earlier for you. Hold the lectern lightly, use cards and not paper notes.

being found out that we're not perfect: perhaps there is no reason for this fear at all. Mind you, it would be easy to say that there is no reason for any fear, that isn't really the point. If we believe that fear is false evidence appearing real then we must look at each probable cause of embarrassment and see if it is false. Well, I've yet to meet anyone who is perfect and I'm sure that you can say the same. Those who will listen to you won't expect you to be perfect. Would you expect someone to be perfect? No of course not and nobody is! So trying for absolute perfection in speaking is a total waste of time. We aren't going to do it. Wanting to be the best we can be, yes; wanting to move the audience, yes; wanting to get our point over, clearly, confidently, concisely, yes. Perfection: no way.

Lack of knowledge: it's unlikely that you'd have many occasions when you'd have to speak about something of which you have no knowledge whatsoever isn't it? However, there may be a case when it is suddenly sprung on you to talk about something where you believe that you're not as knowledgeable about that subject as others might be. Well, in that situation, this is what to do: involve other people and make it a discussion and not a speech just by you, ask questions of the audience and then comment on the answers. When you talk, stick to what you know, however, small your knowledge base is on the subject in hand, don't add in things you're not sure about, stay with the stuff you're sure of, that way you know that you can be confident with your talk.

People will judge us. You and I know for some people the prospect of standing and speaking is so frightening, so nerve wracking, so fearful that they would do anything rather than speak in public. Well part of that may be the fear of judgement by other people. Everyone is concerned about other people's opinions of them and this is understandable. Again, by focusing, by thinking about what could or will happen, we can diminish this fear. If the people in the audience are important to us and our future then, yes, a concern is natural and useful, but it's highly unlikely that the audience will have a totally negative attitude towards us. Here is the solution, your thought process must be that you know you can't please all the people all of the time, some of those you talk to won't take to you, that's life! But my personal attitude is based on the following: I heard a poem from Michael Bash, one of the co-founders of Federal Express (FedEx), about the mother eagle talking to her chicks, *Come to the edge* she said. *They came, she pushed them and they flew.* Now when I stand and talk, some people will really relate to me and what I have to say, some will be able to be swayed and a few won't relate to the messenger (me) or the message, that's life! If I'd done my job properly as a speaker then I know I've had to challenge people's thinking, challenge some of their ideas, challenge some of their beliefs and this is a dangerous process. By these challenges I know that some people won't like it, but I also know that those who do understand what I'm saying and wish to make a change in their lives will understand, I just have to accept this as part of the process. Unless I push some people off the edge and they realise they can fly I haven't been true or fair to those people. If in the process some don't like it, and there aren't often many in that category, then that's just too bad. So, if you're at all concerned about people judging you, you're right to think that they will. All you need

to do is accept it, that's life! If they judge you well, well ... if they judge you badly, well ... so what. As I heard many years ago from a successful sales person when they were talking about cold calling on prospects to get an appointment, *some will, some won't, so what, next.*

Losing the audience: losing the audience can be a challenge and this usually happens not through any nervousness on the part of the speaker, but more often because of the content of the speech. I've already shared with you the icebreaker or refocusing exercise of geometric testing, so that's one way to regain the audience's attention. The other ways are to ensure that if your talk is going to be long enough for the audience to have the opportunity to get bored, that you ensure in the planning and writing that you have, as I explained in the carpet fitter's technique explanation, that you have balance. Balance between right brain and left brain thinking. Balance between involvement and passive listening. Balance between serious messages and some humour. Know that you've properly prepared what you're going to say and that it has balance and, therefore, will be unlikely to lose the audience's interest. It will enable you to overcome any fears, you may have had, at the idea that you'll lose the audience.

Finally, in this section, equipment failure. Fear of equipment failure is a very real fear, as it is something which can be totally outside of our personal control. A computer which fails to boot up, a program which fails to start or a corrupted disk can be a real challenge. The remedy or solution is to have a back up of everything e.g. I mentioned to you that I had an OHP fail on me. However, I was still able to talk and get the message over. I've had computers fail to perform and again the show must go on, just keep talking! The audience, however small or big, is extremely sympathetic to equipment failure; they know these things happen, just be confident and carry on.

Let me give you a real life example of equipment failure and the problems it can produce. There is a lesson to be learnt from this. Some years ago I saw a very slick presentation from a professional speaker, he was using a computer and backlit projection, there was video, sound and moving graphics all over the place, it was entertaining and extremely professionally put together. There was one problem. To start with, the whole focus of the audience was on the screen and not on the presenter, this almost made the presenter the technician and not the messenger, you know what I mean. The real problem was his reliance on technology. Some years after having first seen him in America, I had the opportunity to speak on the same stage as him, in England. In fact, I was to introduce him as well. The day before the conference where we were speaking we had lunch together and I was asking him about his presentation. He told me the following. He was giving his usual presentation at a large conference, he went onto stage and started, his computer failed and there he was with nearly two hours to fill and no slides, no graphics, no sound, no nothing except himself. He coped with it, just about. I knew from the look on his face and the voice tones and the words he used that it was a very painful experience. For the conference where we were both speaking and for every speaking engagement since that fateful computer failing day, he had avoided any technology whatsoever. He had reverted to a flipchart, even though the audience was several hundreds of people, so you can see what computer or equipment failure can do. The real lesson to learn from this is that when you stand to

speaking, the audiences come to hear you speak, not to give a brilliant demonstration of your ability to generate graphics or sound or anything else. Visual aids, yes, aids not the message itself. So, how do you and I get over this problem of equipment failure and the possibility of it creating nerves. Here are the answers. Never be totally reliant on equipment to put over your message. Always think of equipment as an aid, not the main messenger, always put new batteries in equipment or ask if new batteries have been put in. Carry spares for everything. When things go wrong and from time to time this will happen, be confident! This alone will have the audience totally on your side and use humour to make light of the situation. So, let me summarise this section: *fear* we can think of as *false evidence appearing real*, and with analysis and proper planning we can overcome these fears and really look forward to speaking up.

Now I want to share with you twenty-one different ways by which you'll be able to overcome nerves, nerves of speaking, nerves of performing, nerves of anything. The first one is called the *Superman method*. This will use the power of your mind to enable you to take any positive or confident experience from your past and programme that positive or confident feeling into the future. Let me explain the process and then we'll do it together. I'm going to ask you to remember a time in your life when you were extremely confident, a time when you felt really great and in control of yourself, then I'm going to get you to visualise yourself in that situation again and recall all of the factors involved, all your feelings. Then when you have that firmly in mind, I'll ask you to visualise a circle around your feet. This circle can be any colour you want it to be, then you'll step out of the circle and leave the confident feelings inside the circle. Sounds strange! Yes it is, but your mind will deal with this very effectively. Then you'll place the circle in the future at upcoming event where you need the same level of confidence, so think of an occasion when you'll need that feeling again and we'll lock that confident feeling in your mind at that time, so you'll feel confident and positive when that event takes place. Simple! So, here goes ... you need to listen to this part of the programme when you're not doing anything else such as driving or exercising as it will be necessary to close your eyes, so if you're doing something at the moment then by all means listen through this part and then listen again when you can close your eyes.

Here we go ... a mind programme to move confidence to any event in your life. Sit quietly and comfortably and close your eyes. Now take a deep breath in and exhale, relaxing as you do so. Breathe in and as you exhale, relax. Now think of a time in your life when you were extremely confident, a time when you were in control of yourself, enjoying a positive experience. Now that you have that time, I want you to see yourself and how you looked, see everything about you. Notice all the colours, all the sights, now hear all the sounds that were happening, now feel all the great feelings you had at that time. Isn't that good? Totally confident, positive and in control, see it, hear it, feel it. Now I want you to magnify those feelings, make them stronger, your mind can do this easily. I don't know how much stronger you want those feelings to be, you will decide. Make them stronger, feeling even more confident, even more positive, even more in control. Now that you are, imagine a circle of light around your feet, you can choose which colour this is, see it now, a circle of light around your feet. Isn't it marvellous, the way your mind can do these things? You have that power, now move backwards, stepping backwards out of the circle leaving all the confident feelings inside

the circle, leaving the power, the confidence, the positive attitude in the circle. Keep moving backwards in your mind until you know that you've left those great feelings inside the circle. OK, you're there, now think of that upcoming occasion when you'll need that confidence again, see and hear what will be happening just before you are about to speak. Will it be someone saying your name? Will it be a door opening? Will it be the sound of someone else's voice? See it and hear it. Now, place that coloured circle of light in the picture in your mind, in that future event. See yourself in the picture of light just in front of you, now step into the circle and immediately feel all those confident, positive, powerful feelings again. You feel so confident, so powerful, so positive, so in control of your feelings, now totally ready to speak up for yourself. Doesn't that feel great? OK, take one deep breath and exhale, slowly opening your eyes and feeling great. Knowing that you've programmed a future event with all the confidence, power and positive attitudes you'll need to perform at your best. Well done!

Your mind is a marvellous piece of equipment, you can use this process to programme any feeling into any event in the future, replay this part as often as you need to, to programme your mind until the time that you are so at ease with the process that you will be able to run the programme in your mind any time you want to. The first time I tried this process my circle was bright blue and I programmed it to be just outside my car door as I opened the door and stepped out. The event in question was a month away and in the intervening period, I didn't think about the idea again. When I arrived in the car park, parked my car and opened the door, immediately there was the circle in my mind, I smiled at the power of the process. My confident, positive, powerful feelings returned in a rush of pleasure, I know that you will experience the same feelings, I call this idea the *Superman method* as I see it being like Superman, able to enter the phone box and don his red and blue suit. You and I are able to don any suit of attitude we want.

Outward focused goals - in the discussion about the audience I covered this for you. One of the best ways to overcome nerves in my experience, is to take the focus of yourself and put the focus firmly on the audience and satisfying their wants and needs. This outward focus is the opposite of what most people have when they stand to speak up on any occasion, they focus on themselves and by that focus they create nerves. Focus outward and you will find that the audience will realise that focus and warm to you and to your message and your style. When you say what you want to say with belief, with passion and with a certain knowledge that you have helped those who hear you in some way, then your nerves will evaporate so quickly it will surprise you. Putting these outward focus goals on paper in answer to a self-question such as "What are my goals for my talk today", is one of the absolute keys for the eradication of nerves. I urge you to use it every time, yes, every time you have to speak. Know your material, when you've researched what you're going to say, when you are confident that you know what you're going to say and you've practised what you're going to say then the nerves will reduce if not disappear altogether.

Let's think of the conversations you have on a day-to-day basis. I'm certain that you have probably had similar conversations but with a number of different people. You know this situation, you have an opinion, you have the chance to share that opinion with quite a number of people over a few days, perhaps because the topic is in the news. Each time you express that opinion you're certainly more fluent and more eloquent in your argument, isn't that true? Well that's knowing your material and practice. So if you know you have an occasion coming up when you'll have to speak, learn the material well by chatting to others about it, this is great practise and a great way to sort out your thoughts by explaining them to others. Here is a tip though. Don't discuss your ideas with anyone who'll be in the audience on the day, you want to keep your powder dry. Practice – I've prepared a whole section for you on how to practise. At this stage while we're discussing overcoming nerves, let me just say that practice is essential. Things we practise we get good at, the same for standing and speaking.

Meet the audience. This is a great way to overcome nerves. If you take the time to meet the people to whom you'll speaking prior to the time that you'll speak, then you'll feel that you're speaking to people you know. The other benefit for you is this, that you have the chance to build rapport with members of the audience and that rapport can be used when you stand to speak. I know from experience that when I meet audience members before speaking I also gain little bits of information which I can blend into what I have to say and it's usually acceptable to say, "I was talking to John before the meeting started and he told me that one of the key challenges facing your market is.... Well my talk today is focused on precisely that point." If you wish to ask a question at a public meeting, try to meet the person who is going to answer your question, perhaps at the coffee break. Don't tell them the question you are going to ask, just have a conversation and build rapport. That way when you're asking the question you can look at that person and in effect be talking one to one, so when possible meet the audience or at least some of the audience.

Listen to yourself. Now I don't mean this in the usual way, in all the listening courses I've heard or attended or read, there is no focus on listening to yourself. Those courses are usually about listening to other people. Let me now share a key idea with you, it's called *Dynamic listening*. When you listen to yourself and I mean hear the words come out of your mouth and back into your ears, you really hear what you say. This is very different from the usual listening to the words you say aloud and at the same time hearing them in your head. Listening to the words you say with your ears is a revelation the first time you'll do it. You'll suddenly realise that you can hear what you're saying, you can listen to what you're saying and by so doing you realise when you make mistakes and you've stopped making them. One of the concerns that many people have about speaking up is that they will use a lot of unnecessary words such as *er, um, and basically, and you know*. Well once you start listening to yourself you'll hear these words clearly and as soon as you do, you'll realise that you can avoid them, it's amazing. I urge you to practise this dynamic listening on a regular basis; you'll probably find that to start with you slow down your rate of speech and for the moment that is no bad thing. I'll talk about the rate at which you need to speak to retain audience concentration when I cover voice and delivery later on. So, yes, you'll slow down but as soon as you get comfortable with listening to yourself, you'll find that you

will revert to your normal rate and still be able to hear, really hear what you're saying. *Dynamic listening* is a superb skill to know and use.

Removing *um, er,* and *basically* and *you know*: well dynamic listening is one way and there is another way of removing these unnecessary filler words, which can make you feel nervous about speaking, nervous because you know you have a habit of using such words. Here it is and it's fun. Put an elastic band around your wrist and every time you hear yourself say any of these words then pull on the elastic band and snap it on your wrist. We can think of this as *Aversion therapy*, it works remarkably well. Why? Because it hurts!

*Anchoring* is a very powerful technique. Let me explain it for you and then how you can use it to overcome nerves and do lots of other things as well. In our minds we associate certain things together, e.g. there may be a particular piece of music you know and when you hear it you immediately think of a place or a person and in so doing have the feelings associated with that place or person. You'll have probably heard couples say "Ooh! That's our tune". Certain tastes will probably bring back memories of all sorts of events, a drink may remind you of a holiday, a spicy dish reminds you of an evening out. This anchoring or association of things locks together in our minds, works for all the senses, sight, sound, touch, feel, smell and taste. These are our visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory senses, what's often shortened to *vakog*. So if our minds are capable of associating different things together, a taste to a feeling, a sight to a fond memory and the feelings associated with it, then just think what we can do when we decide on the associations and firmly anchor one thing to another.

Let me give you an example of anchoring. As an avid listener to audio tapes, I spend most of the car journeys I take on my own listening to tapes. One day some years ago I was travelling on the M5 motorway in England listening to the *Silver Method programme* from Nightingale Conant. Part of the tape was self-hypnosis and was not designed to be listened to in the car but I was listening to the process knowing that I would assimilate the words. As I was listening to one particular part I passed a farm which was situated at the side of the motorway. It was a hot summer's day and to the least the smell drifting across the road was intense though not an uncommon farmyard smell. Now every time I smell that smell the sound of the presenter's voice comes immediately into my mind. It's a really peculiar sensation but that's anchoring and I've found that smell, the use of the olfactory sense is the one that creates the most powerful anchors.

Here's how you can use the idea of anchoring to overcome the nerves. You'll recall the Superman exercise earlier so you know that you can recall a time when you felt confident and positive. What we were doing with that method was to anchor the coloured circle with a particular set of feelings. Well, you can recall the confident feelings again and create a different way to anchor those feelings. This is what to do: remember the occasion when you felt confident, really experience it again, get a real high with confidence and then create a physical anchor by let's say clenching your fist or pinching your wrist or smacking your fist into the other palm. You can decide on the physical action, as long as you are feeling the real feelings of confidence and you are really high on that feeling then the physical action you've taken clenching your fist or

whatever will be beginning to be anchored or linked together and if you repeat this exercise on a number of occasions then you will definitely create the link. OK so far, now how do you use it? When you want the feelings back, the feeling of confidence, the feeling of being totally in control then you fire the anchor or in other words you do the physical thing and you'll find that the thing you anchored it to, your feelings will immediately come back. So, you clench your fist or pinch your wrist and immediately feel confident again. It's so simple to do and yet so unbelievably powerful.

Let me give you some more examples. You do something powerful, something that you know demonstrates your confidence, it may be speaking, it may be playing a game, it may be anything. When you feel confident doing what it is, when you're really in zone then create an anchor. Then whenever you want that feeling, fire the anchor. You can anchor feeling with all your senses. In the past I've anchored confidence to a piece of music. I did a series of seminars in the UK. At each one of them there were between 150 and 400 people. It was held at 12 venues over a six-week period. At each event I used the same AV (audio-visual) company and every time I walked on stage they played by arrangement with me the same piece of music, so this piece of music became my anchor for high confidence feelings. This music together with my anchored wrist pinch immediately created high enthusiasm, high energy, high confidence mode for me. You can do the same. Because taste is so powerful as an anchor, you can use a sweet or mouth spray as an anchor, which is very effective.

You'll have seen sports people using anchoring, albeit some of them won't realise that that's what they're doing. My favourite is golfers; you see them go through the same routine every time, yes, every time before they take a shot. Sports people use these ideas all the time, they've anchored through repetition, certain actions to certain feelings, they've created a pattern in their minds that one action will follow another one and they rely on that pattern to create success. If there's a particular piece of music which makes you feel upbeat, play that music and when you have those upbeat feelings, listen intently to the music. Next time you hear the music you'll feel great. You've heard of people having a lucky mascot. This uses the same idea, good feelings and the anticipation of good performance. Now isn't that anticipation important, anchored or linked to the mascot? Again, and forgive me for using another golf analogy, I've recently seen Tiger Woods playing and heard a commentator say "Ah! It's the fourth day of the competition and as usual there's Tiger wearing his fourth day clothes, red top, black trousers". Well why does he do that? Because he knows he's played well in those colours before, he's anchored that feeling. He's anchored the feeling that he's played well in those colours and by wearing them again he's firing the anchor. So, I'll go more into anchoring later in the programme, but let me summarise this part of it. Get into a high emotional state, the state you wish to anchor, take a physical action like clenching a fist or a wrist pinch or whatever you decide and repeat the procedure as many times as possible. The next time you want that same emotional state, then do the physical thing or in other words, fire the anchor and the feelings will come flooding back. Now that you recognise anchoring I know you'll recognise previous anchors you have perhaps created unintentionally e.g. you see a certain person and immediately have feelings, those feelings might be anger, love, happiness or any number of different things, you've anchored in the past that person's face to those

feelings. Be very aware of the anchors you already have and the anchors you're creating, make certain that you create positive anchors for the feelings you want.

The next idea is *Muscle memory*. This is very similar to anchoring but there is a special tip I'd like to share with you. If you're able to actually stand in the place where you will speak, prior to the time you'll speak, then you have the opportunity to create muscle memory. This is what I do and you can do the same. I make sure I arrive in good time and practise walking to the point from which I'll speak, turning to the entry room I start my speech in exactly the same way I'll do it for real, the same voice, the same tones, the same words, the same volume, the same feelings, and what this has done is create muscle memory. Then when I come to do it for real, I've already done it once before and the prospect of doing it a second time is never as unnerving as doing it the first time. You can do the same.

The next idea is the power of visualisation. So much has been talked about imagining and visualisation over the years that you may have come across the idea already. Despite that, it's well worthwhile me covering the key ideas and thoughts on visualisation for you, as it is one of the major ways of overcoming the nerves associated with speaking. Let me start by giving you some background of the idea of visualisation and imagining and then explain how to do positive visualisations. Most athletes these days do visualisations, certainly most professional speakers do, and so does anyone who has been exposed to the power of the idea and fully understands how visualisation and imagining can create the future they want. The famous quotes of history focus our minds on the fact that *What the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve*, a quote from Napoleon Hill's book *Think and Grow Rich*. *You become what you think about*, a quote from Earl Nightingale's million selling record *The Stranger Secret* and many, many others. The *Silver Method* audio programme I mentioned to you earlier teaches how we use the power of our minds to become almost clairvoyant and programme the future. Trials with athletes have proven time and time again that visualisation practice can be more effective than practice itself at times. So there is ample evidence to prove that imaginings and visualisations can work.

Let's get the terms defined before we go any further. I used the term *visualisation* to mean exactly the same as *imagining*, some would suggest that we use visualisation to visualise things that have already happened and imagining to imagine things we want to happen. But for ease of use for you on this programme I use the term *visualisation* to mean seeing into the future and visualising what we want, this is how to do it. Don't do this exercise whilst driving or otherwise occupied, simply listen through the tape to understand what will happen and replay the tape and do the exercise for real when you can safely undertake the process. I'll be asking you to do a relaxation exercise, breathing in on the number as I count down from 10 to 1 and breathing out as I continue to speak. You'll probably do this exercise on your own sitting comfortably but with your head erect. I'll be asking you to visualise on a screen in front of you and on it will be a picture of the event or meeting, where you're next going to speak. This screen will be a few yards or metres away and slightly above your eye line so you have to look slightly up towards the screen at an angle of about fifteen to twenty degrees above the horizontal. Together we'll use the power of your mind to programme your success and



confidence for the event. If at any time during the exercise you need to be fully awake then simply open your eyes and you will be totally awake, ready to deal with any emergency should it occur.

Here is the exercise, so sit comfortably with your head erect, and take one deep breath in and exhale, relax. Now I'll count down from ten to one and as I do so breath in on each number and out as I continue to speak. In on each number and out as I continue to speak. 10, relax now, as you feel relaxed, 9, relax and go deeper, and deeper, more relaxed, 8 feel comfortably totally relaxed, 7, go deeper, relax, 6, and each time you hear me say relax you will relax even more than before, 5, go deeper, relax, 4, relax, feeling at peace, deeper and deeper, 3, relax, 2, deeper now, totally calm, 1, deeply relaxed, relaxed. Now still with your eyes closed you will create a screen in front of you a few metres or yards away from you. This screen is just slightly higher than your eye level, so you need to look up to it, still with your eyes closed. On the screen see the event at which you will be speaking, now bring yourself into the picture, see yourself speaking, speaking with confidence, speaking with clarity, speaking with conviction. See what you're wearing, see the other people in the room smiling at you and understanding every word you say, hear yourself speak, feel the feelings you're experiencing. Feelings of confidence, positive feelings, feelings you enjoy. Take a moment now and run that event on the screen, still seeing you acting in a positive way, delivering what you want to say with confidence. Now slowly let the screen dissolve knowing that you have programmed the positive outcome you desire. I'll now count up from one to ten and with each number you will be coming up slowly until I reach ten when you will be totally awake, feeling relaxed and confident, sure of your own abilities, positive about yourself. 1, coming up slowly now, 2, getting stronger, 3, feeling confident, 4, 5, 6, 7, getting more awake, breathe in deeply with strength knowing that when you open your eyes at the count of ten you'll be totally awake and feeling refreshed and relaxed knowing that you are confident in your ability to stand up and speak up for yourself, 8, 9, 10, wide awake now! Feeling fully refreshed and confident. Well isn't that a great feeling to have, you now know with certainty that you will perform with confidence at that speaking event. Congratulations! You have used the power of your mind to programme your future success.

Here is another powerful way to overcome the nerves. I did say to you that I had a number of ways didn't I? Each of them has it's own part to play and by their use you'll find the one or ones that will work especially well for you, the words to say to yourself which will programme your mind. Unfortunately most people fill the computer between their ears, their minds, with negative can't-do stuff, that prevents them from achieving in life what they might. They believe the rubbish that other people tell them about their abilities and worse still, they repeat that rubbish and by so doing continue to reinforce negative beliefs. This must be avoided at all costs, not only for the opportunities to speak but also for all action and desired results. Here is the process to understand how the words that you say will affect the outcomes you achieve. The words you say inside your mind, outside your mind and the words you believe of other people become the programmes of your mind. These programmes encode your belief patterns, these patterns create the attitude that you have towards yourself and towards the world, what I call your in look and outlook. In turn these attitudes create leverage,

the leverage to take action. Now leverage for a human being is based on two factors: away motivated actions, those are the actions away from pain and towards motivated actions, those are the actions towards pleasure. We can call this pain and pleasure, so you take action and by so doing create a result. Isn't that simple? Words encode beliefs, beliefs create attitude, attitude creates leverage, leverage prompts action and action creates results. So, here is my expression for that whole process, *What you say will be the way. What you say will be the way!*

There are a number of ways to prove this process to yourself, the one's I use on my seminars are the following: I ask the members of the audience to imagine they're holding a lemon, I then have them make the action of cutting the lemon in half with a sharp knife, although they don't have a sharp knife and they don't have a lemon, they just go through the motions. Then I ask them to take half of the lemon with the juicy side up and to smell the lemon, then I ask them to take a bite out of the lemon. Remember there isn't a lemon. For the majority of people they will feel just as though the lemon had existed, their mouth has generated saliva to try and balance the citric acid in their mouth. Strange isn't it? My words created pictures in their minds, the pictures and words created a belief pattern that said they had a lemon, had cut it and were smelling it and eating it. They had an attitude towards the lemon, leverage of away motivation, away from the sharp taste, action was automatically taken and they had a result, saliva was generated.

You know people who tend to say that they're usually late for things? What usually happens? Yes, they're often late, they live by the programmes they say. You know people who say that they're always nervous about speaking up, what happens? Surprise, surprise they're nervous about speaking – what you say will be the way! Can you imagine that anyone would get up in the morning and sit on the side of their bed and for about thirty seconds or so repeat negative programmes, words such as they would get ill or they were going to catch an incurable disease or they were going to have the worst day of their lives? No! Of course not. Why? Because they would be concerned that the words might, yes, might just create that result, and so they'd be understandably scared to do it.

But let's do the flip side. Very few people would take the time and effort to programme their minds with the right programme and yes, if the negative words can work, why wouldn't the positive ones have just as much chance? Believe me, the positive programmes always work to the degree that someone believes they will, so let's examine the words that are often said about speaking and the words that should be said about speaking. The wrong words are when people say such things as they're always nervous when they have to stand and speak. They hate speaking and their knees knock when they stand to speak, they say they're scared stiff and similar stuff which is so negative and reinforces negative beliefs. You'll notice that I always refer to them, using the word *they* and made no reference to *you* and *me*. Who would want those negative expressions expressed in the first person? No one in their right mind. All of these negative words become the programme in the computer and Hey Presto! That is the result that is experienced. Let's look at the positive words and expressions: I love to stand and speak; when I stand and speak people listen to me with interest; standing and

speaking up is great!; I know what I have to say will make a difference to other people. Aren't those much better expressions than the negative stuff! So you must be extremely careful with the programmes you run in your mind, fully understanding that the words will create the outcome every single time. If you hear yourself saying something negative then simply rephrase the statement to cancel out the negative one, e.g. you hear yourself saying

"I don't like speaking in public." Rephrase,  
"I love to speak in public." *You have to fake it until you make it.*

*Affirmations* are the words you say repeatedly to programme your mind. If you have an upcoming event where you know you have to speak then write out an affirmation card, affirm your belief in you and your ability to create the outcome you desire, write out positive words on a piece of card or paper and repeat these words to yourself on a daily basis, on the days prior to the event. You have to reinforce your belief in yourself and reinforce your belief in your ability to perform the actions you know you wish to perform.

The next idea is meditation, those who undertake regular meditation of some description seem to be more relaxed in their attitude to life, and more relaxed in their attitude to speaking, and if you haven't yet found a way or method to meditate then I would suggest that this would be something worth looking at. I practice like millions of other people, transcendental meditation, simply twenty minutes every morning and twenty minutes every evening in silence, trying to get in the gap between my thoughts. That's silent time when nothing makes a sound, including my own busy brain, this creates an inner peace which rubs off onto every activity including speaking up. Practice, perhaps one of the easiest ways to overcome something is to do it. I'm sure you can recall the first time you tried to drive a car or ride a bike or undertake any other apparently scary activity, can't you? Well, at first, yes, it was a bit nerve racking. However, with a few lessons so that you knew what to do and some practice so that you used what you knew, you soon became proficient and perhaps actually enjoyed doing it. So if you practise speaking then what happens, you learn to speak. Oh, by the way, that's how children learn to speak, they just do it, they don't think that they might get it wrong, they just go ahead and do it. They take action, it works for everything. It's great to know how to swim by examining a textbook on swimming. However, you only ever really find out if you can swim by jumping in the water. I'll go into various practice techniques with you later in the programme.

The next one is breathing exercises. Breathing exercises can really help eradicate nerves, so here is the breathing pattern to use. Please remember that if when you're doing these exercises you feel at all faint, stop doing the exercises and go back to your normal breathing pattern. Let me explain the process for you then when you know it, you can use it whenever and wherever in order to calm yourself down. You undertake a regular though increasing breathing pattern based on a number count. This is what you do, you breathe in for the count of four, 1,2,3,4 and then hold that breath for the count of four, 1,2,3,4 and then breathe out for the count of four 1,2,3,4 and then hold for the count of four without breathing 1,2,3,4 and then start again. Isn't that simple? You do the exercise four times, that's in for four, hold for four, out for four, hold for four, four

times. If you wish to continue then you can increase to the count of six, this would be in for six, hold for six, out for six, hold for six and you do that four times. If you want to increase again then you go up to eight, in for eight, hold for eight, out for eight, hold for eight, and you can do that four times. This calm and relaxed way of breathing will calm your nerves and make you feel strong and really alive.

The next method, moderate exercise, is another way to calm yourself. Perhaps a walk around the block before speaking would work for you. Again, as with all these things, they should be done at a moderate pace – it isn't the four minute mile, that will probably just leave you breathless and unable to speak – just a moderate pace.

Relaxation exercises – These are so easy to do and a great way to relax your body and by so doing relax your mind. This is how to do it. Sitting down you start at your feet and tense all the muscles in turn and then relax them. Start at your feet, tighten your foot muscle, hold that for just a few seconds and then slowly relax the muscles, now your lower leg muscles, tense them for a few seconds and then slowly relax them. Do this for all the muscle groups in your body, finishing with your neck and shoulders. By the time you've done all of the muscles, you'll feel calm and relaxed and totally in control of yourself. These exercises are so simple aren't they? They each just take a few minutes and still work wonders.

And now for some things to avoid, so the nerves do not come into play. Avoid drinking too much alcohol, avoid drinking too much tea or coffee, avoid smoking just before you speak – it will dry your throat and mouth, avoid spicy foods and avoid high fat products – they will coat your larynx. So there you have it! Twenty-one ways to overcome the nerves of speaking up and to ensure that you enjoy the experience and wish to repeat it time and time again.

I've left the best idea until last, this is number twenty two, the best, the very best way to overcome any nerves you may have had at the thought of speaking up and I know this seems too simple and yet it is the best way, there's no substitute for actually doing it, as in the doing we learn that we can do it. The larger the audience the better, the more adrenaline rush, the better, the more you do it, the better, all of these actions will prove to you that just like so many people, you can stand and can speak up for yourself on any occasion. Some years ago, one of the largest number of people I'd spoken to at one time was about 400 and I was asked to be the key note speaker at an event where there was to be three thousand people. I was looking forward to it and on the day felt a slight twinge of nerves. Great, I thought, that's my body getting ready for a fight or flight and I know it isn't going to be flight. So instead I can be keyed up to give of my best. Well I had the usual symptoms, slightly sweaty palms, dry mouth and all that stuff, and still at the same time felt exhilarated at the prospect, it was great. I really enjoyed myself, then a funny thing happened. A couple of weeks later I was again speaking but this time it was to about 750 people, and you know what happened? It was though I was sitting at home in my lounge having a conversation with a few friends and the same a few weeks later to 800 people, just like sitting at home chatting. Once we push ourselves off the edge and do it then the next time it's easier.

I think of it like this: one of the ways that is taught in rapid reading courses is to read a number of pages of very fast indeed, so, fast that you feel you're just not taking in the words. It's best if someone guides you through this, setting the pace by telling you when to turn the pages, then when you've slowed down slightly you find that you are reading and taking in all the words and the meanings. When this second reading is timed, people find they are now reading at two and three times the speed they were prior to the exercise. By challenging yourself to do something way out there, far exceeding your normal activity, then when you slow down or in speaking, speak to less people, it seems so easy.

If you had any fear at the prospect of speaking up, then take each of the ideas I've just been through for you, try each one and find out which one or ones work for you, then using those ideas push yourself off the edge, arrange to speak on any occasion you can, find larger and larger groups of people to talk to and by so doing you'll become more confident than you ever previously thought possible. As I said at the start of this section, now that you have internalised these ideas, I don't know how much better you will feel about yourself, I don't know how much more successful you will become, I don't even know how soon you'll find yourself standing and speaking, what I do know is that those people who have experienced these ideas say to me, "Peter, these ideas are very simple, very easy to put into practice, and make me feel so confident". I know that you will feel the same.

Of all the stages of speaking up, perhaps the one which can present the greatest headache for many people is actually writing down what they want to say. They've a vague notion of the message they want to get across, they have some idea of where they want to go with their speech and they have some thoughts on what they want the audience to do with the ideas they explain. What they don't have is a way to write down all of those ideas, thoughts and actions. Well over this next section, this is what we'll cover together, setting the goals and objectives, planning the outcome of the talk or speech, a quick review of stories and research, how to get the audience to remember what you've said, writing logistics, how to write what you want to say and the format for writing a company meeting or sales conference speech. By the end of this session you'll know precisely how to get your thoughts down on paper in a logical fashion and how to create a speech, a talk, a presentation, that will have a real impact on your audience. Once you've written what you want to say and know it's in the right order and in the right format, then you will have greater confidence to deliver your message. So let's begin!

Goals - Goals are essential for any activity, in fact for all activity. If you don't know where you're going, all the roads will lead there. This old and somewhat trite expression is nevertheless as true today as it always has been. All personal development programmes, whether on tape, in books, or live seminars talk about goal setting. The usual story of the Harvard leaving class of '52 is quoted. In case you haven't heard this before, let me tell you it briefly now, you may well be able to use it in one of your speeches. Evidently the leaving class at Harvard in 1952, were asked if they had written goals for their lives. Just 3% of the class had written goals, a further 10% had goals but they weren't written down and the rest, the 87%, didn't have goals. This

was a long-term study. Twenty years later, these same people were asked about their level of success and for this study it was decided that the measurement would be in purely financial terms, so they were asked for details of their financial net worth. It's reported that the 3% who had written goals, when their wealth was added together it exceeded the total of the wealth of the other 97%. Well if that doesn't make anyone think about goal setting then I don't know what would. However, I know that many people have heard about goal setting, many people have read about goal setting and many people have known others who have succeeded because they set goals, and yet, I know that most people do not take the time and effort to sit down and write out their life goals. Well, let me assure you that the one thing that differentiates your speeches, your presentations, your talks from everyone else's is when you are the one that set goals for the outcome and objectives of what you're going to say.

The purpose or objective of any talk is to entertain, persuade, inform or motivate those who hear the message. Perhaps you are to speak at a party or wedding, where your main purpose in speaking is to entertain those who have attended, perhaps you're going to speak at a sales conference where motivation of the sales team is the thrust of your presentation, perhaps you are to talk at a team meeting to let everyone know details of the new purchase order system, or even perhaps you are to make presentation to a potential client to sell them on the idea of using your services or buying your products. Whatever the occasion, it is essential that you decide on your goals and your objectives.

The goals must be precise, you must know exactly, precisely what it is you want to achieve, these goals must be exciting to you. If you're not excited at the prospect of accomplishing the goal then why would you even bother to give it your best shot? The goals must be truthful and by this I mean you have to believe that you can achieve it, the goal must involve you in action, effective action, and of course like any good goal you must be able to record to it. You must know that your actions are taking you along the road towards the achievement of the goal and that you'll know when you reach your intended destination. So the first thing to do when you sit down to write out your speech is to write out your goals, that way your mind will be focused and open, next you must write out your objectives for the speech.

Objectives are slightly different from goals, your goal may be to earn extra income from the sale, the sale you make to a new client following a successful presentation. However, the objective would be to ensure that the client fully understood the range of services you have to offer, explain the relevant features of your services and involve each person at the presentation. The goal is your goal, what you want to achieve, the objectives are what you want for the audience, in this case the potential client. Let me give you another example. Let's say you're going to give a motivational talk to the sales team of your company. Your ultimate goal would be to increase turnover and profits, your objectives would be to help the members of the sales force to be more successful. This might be achieved by getting them all to set their personal goals, and by them being more into learning or self-management, so before you start to actually write the speech, write down your goals and objectives.

The second area of writing is planning the speech. Now we've already been through planning together, so this is where the planning starts to pay dividends. You'll plan the writing of the speech, as though it was a journey perhaps using the *six-stage process*. You'll recall that's *Where are you now? How did get here? Where are you going? Why do you want to go there? What are the obstacles? What are you going to do?* You'll decide on the theme you're going to use to stick all the parts of your talk together, you'll list all the areas you want to cover and using the carpet fitter's technique put those areas into the right order. Remember that you'll prioritise them twice and then decide on the real order in which you'll cover them. In the prioritisation process you'll take into account balance, making certain you alternate between serious and light topics, left brain and right brain ideas. You'll be giving thought to where visual aids might be used and be thinking about timings. How much time do you have to speak for? What time of day? And all the other areas that we've discussed already. Next, with those thoughts in mind, you'll check your research files and collect together the information you'll require, you'll have to hand:

- 1) The stories you think you might need.
- 2) The jokes you think will be appropriate.
- 3) A dictionary.
- 4) A thesaurus.
- 5) Your quote books.
- 6) Magazines and newspapers.
- 7) Your notebook or dictaphone where you recorded key thoughts and ideas.
- 8) A book of dates.
- 9) An encyclopaedia or CD-ROM.
- 10) Any other research material you think you'll need.

Now the real planning process starts, you'll want the audience to remember what you've said so you'll need to use the six keys for memory in your presentation. These six keys are the following:

- 1) Firsts.
- 2) Lasts.
- 3) Unusual.
- 4) Linking.
- 5) Review.
- 6) Enthusiasm.

Let's examine them now, one at a time, and see how they'll impact on everything you plan to say.

*Firsts* - We tend to remember the first thing that happens in any situation, our first job, our first boyfriend or girlfriend, our first holiday, better than some of the subsequent events. In a speech we remember the first things that are said better than some of the things said later, and this is why the opening of the speech is critical. I've devoted a whole section later for you on openings and closings. Next,

*Lasts* – We also remember very easily the last thing that happens in most circumstances. You'll be able to easily recall the last time you went out for dinner but it would be difficult to remember every time you've been out to dinner, so you need to think carefully about the closing. Now here's a tip for you! If you're planning a whole day event, then the number of firsts and lasts you have are important. I would strongly recommend that you have a break even if that's a change of subject, every forty-five minutes. This time frame, forty-five minutes, is about the maximum concentration period for most people. It's far better to have a number of short sessions than to have a few long sessions. No doubt you've been at a meeting where each session was two and a half to three hours long, and I'm certain that you noticed that the concentration of most people had waned by the start of the second hour. People need to use the facilities, they need to change position, they may simply have moved into brain overload with information or boredom. Take regular short breaks and the day will fly by and the audience's attention and retention will be high.

*Unusual* – We remember easily things that are unusual, we tend to forget the usual and mundane, so plan for things to be unusual. This may be the style of your notes, full of colour and pictures, it may be music to accompany certain points to create an anchor. I'll go further into ways to anchor the audience into certain actions later. You may have props, which are unusual and help you to make a point; you may have unusual handouts. Things which are unusual stick in our minds.

*Linking* – One of the major ways in which we remember things is the way in which we link new information to information we already know, e.g. if I said to you I would now like to explain four new ways to build your business and because this is going to accelerate your growth, I'd like to think of it like this – as the four gears in a manual gearbox of a car. When we're in first gear we ... and you have the idea. If I was to continue this analogy then you would more easily remember the information because it's linked to something you already know, the four gears of a manual gearbox. So any way that you are able to link information to things already known by the audience will enable them to hang on to the information you supply. This link can be created by the anachronism but as I've already said, be careful with their use. *Review* – The things that we review on a regular basis are the things that we remember. You'll recall at school that you learned your times tables by constantly repeating them. If you review for the audience the information that you've given them then they'll remember it more easily. You can use expressions such as *let me just summarise where we've got to* or *let's just recap*.

*Enthusiasm* – It's definitely true that we remember things for which we have an enthusiasm. If you talk to anyone who supports a sports team and they're a real fan then they'll know many facts and figures about their team and the team members. If, by the way you say what you say, the words you use and the body language you display, you're able to generate enthusiasm in your listeners you can be certain that they will not only buy into your message but they will also remember it. When I run my seminars and talk about this idea of getting people to remember what's been said I explain enthusiasm with the following story. Isn't it strange that when children come home from school and are asked what they had for lunch, they're usually unable to remember although it was only a few hours ago. However, if you ask those same children about the attributes of their favourite toy or action figure then they would have no difficulty whatsoever in giving you all the details. So if you wish your message to be remembered then use these six keys for memory. *Firsts, lasts, unusual, linking, review* and *enthusiasm*.



Following your speech or talk or presentation then you'll want members of the audience to retain the information you've provided, so it's therefore necessary to plan how they will take their notes. There have been a number of studies regarding the retention rate of information based on the different ways of note taking. The studies indicate the following. Perhaps the worst way is when you give the audience a typed copy of what you've said, they're unlikely to read it again as they've already heard you say it. They'll believe they already know the information. Second worst is when you give them a summary typed handout, their retention gets better when they take their own notes. However, if they try to write down everything you say then it's unlikely that they'll keep up with you or write sufficiently clearly to be able to read those notes later, it's far better that they take key word notes and perhaps the best form of note taking is by the use of key words, pictures and colours. The most appropriate form of this is mind mapping, the brilliant idea from Tony Buzan. I use mind mapping to write my speeches, presentations and ideas and in fact for this programme, *How to Speak Up for Yourself on any Occasion*, I did twenty-four mind maps. One for each area, each side of each cassette. If as yet you've not tried mind mapping then I strongly urge you to do so; you'll be able to use mind mapping to write your speeches, presentations and talks. Nightingale Conant has a brilliant audio programme by Michael Gelb, which explains how to mind map. It will be necessary to give thought as to how your audience will take their notes.

Now let's move onto writing logistics. Once you've written out in full the speech you're going to give then you'll need to write it again in a format from which you can deliver it. The main ways I use and that I would recommend to you are the following: Take a normal A4 or legal size piece of paper, laid portrait on your desk or writing area. Draw a line from top to bottom, approximately 1½" (4cm) in from the right-hand edge to form a wide right-hand margin, then write out your speech in your handwriting using short paragraphs, let me repeat, short paragraphs. In the right-hand wide margin alongside each paragraph simply write a key word which is the main thrust of the paragraph, and do this for all the paragraphs of your speech. Now when you come to deliver your speech, you can either speak directly from the paragraph notes or simply use the key words. If you use the key words and get lost then it's very easy to find your place again and if necessary read the whole paragraph. You can use this wide margin, key word method even when you've typed the script on your computer. You would simply, in the page set-up in the file menu, alter the default setting for the right-hand margin from 3.17cm to about 6cm. This will create the appropriately sized right-hand margin. The key word in the right-hand margin must be in your own handwriting because that is the writing you most easily recognise and so if you should become lost in your speech, then you'll be able to find a key word in your own writing, it's a very easy process. Of course these days fonts are available for your own handwriting, I know I use my own handwriting font for my key word right hand-margin notes. In addition I also find it's a good idea to highlight the key word in the paragraph itself.

The second way to have your speaking notes is on 3"x5" cards. These are ideal as they fit easily into a pocket and one card can be used for each idea. Here are a number of tips regarding the use of 3"x5" cards. Number each card. Initially when you write your

speech notes on cards, only put the numbers in pencil because you may decide to change the order of the cards and, therefore, change the numbers. Punch a hole in the top left-hand corner of each card and thread a treasury tag through the holes. The treasury tag is a short piece of string with a metal tag on each end. Once you've threaded the cards onto the tag, they're unlikely to come apart. The beauty of using cards in this way is that they're easy to turn over and should you drop the cards, they'll stay in order. The cards are easy to hold in one hand and simple to use. I'd suggest you use different colours for your notes e.g. red for important items which must be stressed and perhaps green for action points. These colours should also be used on your full page notes.

Here's another important tip. When you write out your speech notes, whether that's on the computer or by hand, use what I call *spoken punctuation*. Remember that no one other than you will be reading these notes and therefore it's totally unnecessary normal punctuation. Use the ellipsis, which is three dots, boldening, italics and any other way in which you can recognise the manner in which you want to say the words. If you use normal punctuation, then you'll not prompt your mind and, therefore, your voice to deliver the message with enthusiasm. I cannot stress this point enough to you. You and I have certainly seen many people over the years deliver information from written notes where the punctuation was obviously written punctuation as opposed to spoken punctuation. Whatever method you choose, highlighting key words, dashes or underlining, it's critical to your delivery that you know precisely where to emphasise certain words and phrases.

It's worth me making an additional point here regarding scripts – many people are opposed to scripts thinking incorrectly that a script will make them sound wooden. This is simply not the case. All great plays and films use a script, all great actors use a script, a script will give you a format and a process to enable you to be your best. Without a script of some description even if this is key words, then your speech may wander from the point it was intended to make. With a script you have structure and a way to practise what you say.

Now let's look at actually writing out the script. The use of three's is one of the keyways to add pace, power and presence to your presentation. You can use three's for your opening, three's for your closing and three's to make important points. I just used three's, then it's a very simple process. Whenever possible, use the power of three's. Let me give you some examples: *I am delighted to be with you today to share some tried and tested and proven ways by which we can all be more successful.* The three was *tried and tested and proven*, you probably noticed that I used two *ands*, *tried and tested and proven*, whereas normally you would expect to hear *tried, tested and proven*, just one *and*. The use of the second adds further emphasis to the statement. Here's another example: *There are three ways profits can be impacted, we can increase our market share, we can increase our turnover and we can increase our prices, and another, We have succeeded this year because we have been better at customer services, better at customer communication and therefore better at customer retention.* And another, *We will win because we'll work together, we will win because we'll act together and we will win because we'll stay together* and another, *There are three critical issues we must address today, whether we should even build the extension, where*

*we will get the funding and if we go ahead who will be the project leader.* You can hear what a smooth rhythm this use of three's has. If you use them sparingly, if you use them effectively and if you use them appropriately then your success in writing, speaking and motivating is assured. When we discuss in more detail openings and closings in the next section, I'll give you some further explanation of the power of three's.

Now let's continue our discussion on writing by looking at jargon. The use of jargon can be both good and bad. If the audience understands exactly what you're saying when you use jargon words, then this will work to your advantage as you'll build rapport with the audience. I always think that rapport means that the other person perceives that they are like me and I am like them. If you use words that people other than the audience members do not know then the audience is part of a select group; on the other hand if you use words, jargon words, which are unknown to the audience then they will perceive that you are trying to be superior and by so doing you'll break any rapport you may have built. If you're at all unsure as to whether or not the audience is likely to know the jargon words, then avoid their use. In your research time find out from the organiser of the event or decide from your own experience, the jargon words that can be used. Nothing builds rapport with an audience faster or better than the correct use of jargon.

If when you're writing your speech or presentation, you'll feel it's necessary to include numbers, then you need to decide if the numbers need to be precise or less than precise. Precise numbers are needed to bring a story to life and less precise numbers are needed if the audience would struggle to understand the numbers, in this case round the number up or down. Let me give you a few examples. During the Blondin story which you'll see and hear on the video which accompanies this audio part of the programme, you'll hear me say the exact date on which Blondin walked on a tightrope across Niagara Gorge. I feel it adds to the story when I am able to say that it was on *30<sup>th</sup> June 1859*, that Charles Blondin, real name Jean Francois Gravelet, walked on a tightrope across Niagara Gorge. Here's another example from that brilliant video by Joel Barker called *The Business of Paradigms*. *In 1965 in a little village in Switzerland called Neuchatel two Swiss watch scientists invented the quartz crystal watch.* The detail brings the story to life. On the other hand you may be trying to get the audience to understand the size of a particular object. Stating that the object in question 75 feet long will not create a picture in most people's minds. However, saying that the object is the length of five standard family cars is probably a better mental picture for most people. If you're able to use visual aids to clearly show the picture you wish to explain then again the use of everyday objects will work well.

As you write your script, ensure that you avoid difficult words, as using words unknown to the audience without immediate explanation will only alienate the people who hear you. Use simple language to get your message across. If you're giving a lecture to a group of scientists then understandably you may use some complicated language and phraseology but with a normal audience use normal language. There are times when you want to use particular words and there are a number of ways of dealing with this: one way is to state the word and immediately state the meaning, another way is to state the meaning of the word and then something along the lines of *And of course these days that's called whatever it is.* The third way is to state the word and then ask the

audience members for the meaning. Let me do these three versions with the word *paradigm*. A few moments ago I mentioned *The Business of Paradigms* by Joel Barker; this is a video I use in training sessions and to start some seminars. Here's how we could introduce the word *paradigm*. It is essential these days that we are open to changing our minds, that we are open to thinking in a different way, that we are open to being prepared to change the rules, often this movement in our thinking process is called a *paradigm shift*. Or I could say it like this,

"It is necessary that we are prepared to undergo a paradigm shift in our thinking that we are prepared to think outside the box, that we are prepared to examine our rules and benchmarks and perhaps even change them". Or with audience participation,

"These days we often hear the words *paradigm shift* or on its own *paradigm*, but what exactly is a paradigm? Does anyone use it and can give us a meaning?" Having used all three versions I've found out that they all work well, so you will decide when you write your script that if you have to use an unusual word which of these three methods you'll use to explain the word.

The key to good script writing is to be yourself, use the language you use in normal conversation, don't put on an act with your language, the audience will know immediately. State with honesty and integrity your point of view and why you believe what you say has value for the audience and why you think the way you do. Not everybody will agree – that's life! But more people will disagree if you sound or seem false. My rule for speaking is based on the expression used in computers, *WYSIWYG* or *What you see is what you get*, I would suggest the same rule for you.

One of the best ways to get your point across to the audience is to tell a story and then make a point from that story, this is good balance with the emotional or right brain thinking followed by logical or left brain thinking. Analogies are great to involve the audience's hearts and minds. Remember at all times that each person who listens to you is tuned in, as stated in all good sales training, to just one radio station, it's called *WIIFM* (*What's in it for me?*). Yes, everyone is listening to you to find out what's in it for them, so make sure you clearly explain the benefits of what you say. Don't rely on just the facts or figures, clearly tell them how they will gain an advantage. In the planning stage we have talked about the audience needs as you write your script, have these needs uppermost in your mind: if you're going to use visual aids in your presentation then these aids need to match what you say. They certainly shouldn't show what you say, everyone can read for themselves, they should be in harmony with the message and as you write, give thought to how you will utilise visual aids in your presentations.

Let me now give you two formulae for writing your script. First is the six-stage process used by most successful sales people, albeit they may not know the process in this way. The second is used to write direct mail, which after all is only salesmanship in writing. The *six-stage process* is this: *Open, gather, present, adjust, close* and *follow*. *Open, gather, present, adjust, close* and *follow*. The *opening* as we've discussed before is essential for retention of information and to get the audience ready to receive the message you're going to put across, the *gathering* stage in sales would be to ask questions. In some presentations you could actually follow this process exactly and at the gathering stage, ask your listeners a number of questions, the answers to which will be the basis of your

speech, this would certainly apply in a sales presentation. The *present* stage is when you present your information, ideas or message. The *adjust* stage is when you adjust what you've said to the audience's understanding of what you've said, this may be in response to questions asked by members of the audience or from your reading of the body language or because you know that that part of your presentation was challenging. In the adjust stage you use fresh examples to make your point clearer, or add additional information to persuade the audience to your point of view or alleviate their concerns or fears. The *close* stage is when you call the audience to action, if that's appropriate. I'll cover closings in greater detail later. The *follow* stage covers such things as any actions you've promised to take following your talk, such as sending further information, checking a particular or anything else where you've promised the audience that you would take action, it also includes following up on any actions that the audience members have promised to take, so that is the six stage process: *Open, gather, present, adjust, close and follow.*

The *direct mail* process is often called *Wiscdar* and it stands for *wavelength, interest, sale benefit, add conviction, desire, action and results.* Wavelength, interest, sale benefits, add conviction, desire, action and results. This is how you'd write your script using the *Wiscdar* process. Your opening would be a *wavelength* statement or question, something that would clearly indicate that you are on the same wavelength as the audience members, e.g. you're speaking at a company meeting of managers where there has been some concern about managers losing some members of staff; by *losing* I don't mean they lost them I mean they had to get rid of them. You know that your department is also under threat of staff redundancies, so you begin your session with *We're all managers in this business and, as we know, each of us is going to be asked to let some of our people go. This has been a challenging time for me as making the decision as to who will go has been an extremely difficult process.* This would obviously be a good way then for the beginning. You're clearly saying that you are the same as the other managers and have the same problems. Often a wavelength which would indicate you do have the same problems or challenges as the listeners, is very effective. Next, you'd state something which would *interest* the audience, perhaps a teaser, something they'd want to know, then you would state how the audience members would *benefit* from taking on board your ideas or your views. After these first three stages, wavelength, interest and sale benefits, you now need to add *conviction*, in other words by telling them that other people have taken the same action that you're asking them to take and that that has produced the results that you want for them. Then you need to build *desire to take action*, and you would do this by explaining firstly what the audience has to lose if they didn't take the action you were suggesting and then explaining in greater detail the benefits they will experience, when they take the actions. You'll then ask them to agree to take those actions and confirm the *results* they'll achieve by doing so. Two very simple processes, the *six stage selling process* and *Wiscdar.*

On some occasions if you're not going to be introduced you'll need to include your credentials. If the audience know why you are speaking and what experience you have in the topic in hand, then they're more likely to believe what you have to say. You'll need to state your experience without sounding in any way bigheaded or superior. One way I've heard used and have used myself is to state clearly your experience and then

follow that with *Now I don't say this to impress you, in any way, simply to impress upon you that the ideas that I am going to share with you today are the result of experience and not just theory.* Said in the right tones and with real meaning, not just using the words, it's very effective. You'll need to test versions of this yourself, however, whatever words you say, it is essential to state your credentials and experience if you're expecting the audience to change their view of the world based on what you have to tell them.

Now what to do if you have writer's block, and just can't think how to start writing. The technique I use, which is self taught, is to start a sentence with *If, Of or Because*, e.g. *Of all the skills used by successful managers the world over, there is perhaps but one which stands head and shoulders above the rest, If ever I could've been an astronaut I know I would ... , Because we all need to enjoy recognition of our efforts, today I'd like to concentrate on ... .* I've found that these three little words have been the start of some really great creative ideas. If you get stuck try them for yourself, I know they'll work for you. As you write your talk or speech, be sure to include the following five elements:

- 1) A title.
- 2) A sub-title.
- 3) Subheads.
- 4) A link to each new idea.
- 5) An introduction to each new idea.

The talk needs a title because that will open the files in people's minds as to the theme of what you're about to say. The title can contain some degree of humour or word play providing it's appropriate. The sub-title gives you a little expansion room for the main title, e.g. recently I was speaking at a conference for photographers, my one hour session was entitled *Positively More Sales*, as I was going to talk about sales, marketing and motivation, so there was a pun in the title. The strap line or subhead was *Putting Yourself in the Frame*, again a pun. Humour with a serious intent often provides good titles and sub-titles. Subheads act usually as a fresh introduction to each section of your talk, they provide a full stop behind the previous subject and lets the audience know that the presentation is proceeding along the journey you outlined in your opening. The link to the new idea and the introduction to the new idea can perform the same function as the subhead; you definitely need something that clearly tells the audience that you're moving to a new area. One of the biggest mistakes I see in presentations and speeches is when a new idea is introduced without an introduction, and it takes the audience a couple of minutes to catch up, by which time they may have missed the main point of the talk. Without an introduction to each subsequent idea, the audience may still be thinking about what you've said about the previous idea. Now, finally in this section, let me share with you a ten-stage process for a company meeting. It is as follows:

- 1) The past, what has happened.
- 2) The competition, who they are and what they're doing.
- 3) The market place - what's happening in our sector.
- 4) The future - the future of our business, the market and anything else relevant.
- 5) How we will stay ahead - new products, new systems.

- 6) Targets – what we’re aiming for, turnover, market penetration, team targets, even individual targets if they’re usually discussed in open meetings.
- 7) Teamwork – discussion and implications.
- 8) Rewards – what the individuals receive if targets are met.
- 9) Our unique advantage – Why we will hit our targets, why we will beat the competition.
- 10) A call to action – what everyone is expected to do, probably an overview and a motivational call to action.

This is a tried and tested and proven formula for company meetings. If you have company meetings to run then I suggest that you try this process and see how good it is, the past, the competition, the marketplace, the future, how we’ll stay ahead, targets, teamwork, rewards, our unique advantage and a call to action. Over the course of this part of the programme we’ve covered a number of important points about writing your talk, writing your script, writing your presentation. We’ve covered goals and objectives, knowing where you’re going and the benefits for the audience, planning the outcome, gathering the research materials together, how to make certain that the audience retains more of what you say with the six keys for memory, writing logistics with number cards and wide margin paper. Writing the script itself using the power of three’s, *Wiscdar* and the six-stage process. And finally company meetings. If you use all of these ideas in the way in which I’ve described them for you, if you practise your skills of writing persuasive copy and if you deliver your message with *passion, persuasiveness* and *power*, then you’re guaranteed success.

Now let’s look at the logistics of an event in which you could be speaking, this could be a meeting at work, a seminar for clients, a presentation to a potential client or even when you’ve been asked to speak at somebody else’s event. Over this section, I’ll cover for you room layouts, space for listeners or delegates, timing, concerns and the event. By the end of this section you’ll have far more knowledge of the main factors of staging an event and be more confident that more of the day is within your control. So, let’s start with room layouts, as the way in which the room in which you’re going to be speaking is laid out will make a vast difference to the way your message is perceived, understood and acted upon. For this example I’m going to assume that you are holding the event and that it’s a small training and discussion session for some of your staff. You’ve booked a room in a local hotel and have to make absolutely certain that the layout will suit the occasion and the outcome you wish to achieve. Here are a variety of options for room layout together with their advantages and disadvantages.

*A circle of chairs* – this layout can be in two forms, a full circle or a semi-circle with a desk or lectern in the open part of the semi-circle. The full circle arrangement is ideal for a small team meeting where you intend that no one person is perceived as being in a superior position and that you wish to involve everyone in the discussion or training session. You can think of it as rather like King Arthur’s round table but without the table. This circle layout has a number of advantages; first no one can hide in the corners, there aren’t any. The layout promotes open dialogue and conversation; it’s easy to go around the circle asking each person in turn to express his or her opinion on the topic in hand. It’s also very easy to read the body language in this layout, which can be a

distinct advantage. The disadvantages are that you and your team members do not have anywhere to rest a note pad or a pen or coffee cups and as you do not have desks or tables, there's no opportunity for modesty boards to be fitted, so women need to be careful how they sit and move. People who are less confident may feel threatened by this layout to the extent that they turn sideways from the centre to try and distance themselves from the discussion. The full circle can be used with desks or tables, however, this obviously takes more space. As with all layouts it will be necessary prior to the event to decide on the outcome you want and what feelings you're trying to engender in the team members and what you wish them to do, such things as take notes, have coffee and sandwiches whilst they're working and so on.

*The semi-circle* – is also very good for team meetings, as everyone can see everyone else quite clearly and there's little opportunity for cliques and side teams to evolve. The desk placed in the open end of the semi-circle would be your position and from this you'd have a good view of all concerned so, body language reading again is very easy. You're able to place your desk at whatever distance you want and by doing so you can vary the intimacy or otherwise of your position. The desk also enables you to have at least two talking positions, you can sit behind the desk using the perhaps as a barrier and you can sit on the front edge of the desk in a more informal pose. Subject to how many people are seated in the circle I would suggest that you position the flip chart if you're using one right behind the desk, in this way you can be certain that everyone can see it. The disadvantages of the semi-circle are similar to the full circle, some people may feel threatened, no modesty boards, nowhere to place things except on the floor and the separate desk can be perceived by team members as distancing by you from the team. Also the desk allows you to have somewhere to place your pens, your coffee cup, your notes whilst the team members do not have that opportunity. So, again this may be perceived as superior positioning.

*The horseshoe* – this is where you have the chairs with tables or desks laid out in a deep U shape with your desk in the open part of the U. This is very similar to the semi-circle but does have one distinct advantage and one distinct disadvantage. The advantage is that you can walk down the middle of the U and get really involved in the conversation or discussion, you can take your chair down into the U for demonstrations or role-play. This is the shape I strongly prefer for small team meetings, up to about 25 people. It works well, it's easy to control the room and people have somewhere for their notepads, pens and bits and pieces. This is the shape I use for my limited number open seminars. Here's another tip for you. With all room layouts subject to how many people are in the room, have people change places after each break, that way they get to meet other people they may not know quite as well as the person they first sat by and you avoid everyone sitting together who always sit together. The disadvantage of the horseshoe shape is that as the sides of the U are straight, anyone on the same side of the U cannot see each other, and with the U shape it will be essential to put the flip chart or screen for the OHP or computer presentation right behind your desk as in any other position it will be difficult for everyone to see it.

*The schoolroom* – is a good design to use for a training meeting because it allows people lots of space for their notes, pens and personal objects. The schoolroom layout is as it



states, just like a schoolroom. Desks in rows neatly aligned both down and across the room. The main advantage is also the main disadvantage in my experience, the room is perceived as a classroom or schoolroom and for some this will have good memories and their minds ready for learning, but for others it will have bad memories and have their minds ready for anything but learning. If the training session is going to involve the use of computers, then the schoolroom layout works well, and an advantage of this layout is that everyone is facing the same way, they are all able to see any visual aids which you may use.

*The chevron* - is where you have two sets of chairs with a centre isle between them. The rows on your left as you face the audience are angled towards you rather than facing straight down the room and similarly the set of rows on your right are turned in to face more towards you than facing straight ahead. This looks like the army sergeant's stripes, but this angling of the rows gives a slightly less formal feel to the room and stops it looking like a classroom. The chevron shape can be used with or without desks or tables. I like to use the chevron shape for the right number of people, about 50 to 75 as it does promote a friendly atmosphere. Here's a tip for you, ensure that the chairs are placed at the correct angle and by the correct angle I mean that the chair faces directly the point where you will stand or sit. This is the main purpose of the chevron, to have everyone in the same room facing the same point. So often, chevron design layouts laid out by hotel staff do not satisfy this prime reason for having the layout in the first place.

*The lecture hall* - is the same as the schoolroom layout but without the desks, and it's usually used for large audiences. The lecture hall layout obviously takes less space than the classroom layout and therefore room hire charges from hotels and conference centres are less than if they had to accommodate the same number of people with desks. If you're running an event where there will be over a thousand people attending then, one tip is this; rather like a cinema, have the rows numbered so that following any breaks, people are more easily able to return to their places. Without row numbers it can be chaos when people try to return to their seats after a break.

*The bier keller* - until just a few years ago I'd not seen this style used. Now I use it and many other speakers and presenters use this style more and more. The bier keller style is where there are long lines of desks running away from the stage or front of the room straight towards the back, rather like as the name suggests a bier keller. The delegates sit at both sides of the desks or tables, which has a number of advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that the delegates face each other and this arrangement is extremely good for break outs and discussion groups, dividing the audience into groups of six to ten people who discuss the topic in hand works very well in deed. The main disadvantage is that some of the audience have to turn their chairs to be able to see the speaker or screen or other visual aids. Despite this disadvantage and the slight discomfort factor for audience members, this layout is one of the best I've used for audiences in the 200 to 300 range.

*The board table* - is ideal for up to about 20 people, creating a more formal setting for a meeting and if the room is decorated and furnished well then it can really add something to the feel of the meeting. I've attended board meetings in dingy hotel rooms and in the most beautifully appointed rooms, the latter certainly adds a successful

business feel to the proceedings. The disadvantage of any board table layout is the blocking of some body language signals and gestures.

*The roundtable* – in the same way that the circle of chairs can promote a team atmosphere, so can the roundtable meeting. There is no apparent head of the table, and open discussion can be promoted.

Now, let's look at some of the logistics with seats and equipment. The comfort or otherwise of the seats is obviously important; seats which are uncomfortable do not promote comfortable thoughts and it may be so bad that breaks are needed far more often than usual. On the flip side then, seats, which are too comfortable, can have delegates or audience members sliding into their seats for a quick nap, as always, careful thought is needed. If you're planning the event and it's at an outside venue such as a hotel or conference facility then sit in the chairs yourself prior to the event so that you'll know what the delegates will experience. When you're planning the event, you'll need to know how many seats are required, if for example you're holding a seminar for clients to introduce a new product line then no doubt you'll have heard from your clients how many are to attend. You and I know that last minute changes of plan will mean that some people who have said that they will attend won't do so. If, or perhaps from experience I should say, when this happens the last thing you want is for some of the front row seats to be empty. This gives a bad impression. Set out for the requisite number of expected guests and then remove the back row of seats until they are needed, if they are needed. In this way you can ensure that if there are any seats which will not be needed, those seats are not set out. This gives a much better impression, a full room, rather than the number of seats not filled.

At the venue itself you'll need to check a number items, all of the equipment, the lighting, the visual aids such things as the TV or video equipment which you may need to use on the day. I'll go into detail about visual aids in a later section for you. Check where all the switches are located and that the air conditioning is working and how it's operated.

Space; I've touched a number of times on the subject of space. It is necessary to plan for the amount of space each person at the meeting will have. There must be sufficient space for their own comfort, not too close and not too far away from other people. There must be space for taking notes or eating or for coffee or teacups. There must be space for people to be able to move. As we will discuss later you, as the speaker, must be able to read the audience's body language and how it's changing in response to what you say and do. The art of reading body language as you'll see on the video and hear about later is essential in speaking skills. There is so much to learn from people's reaction to what you say that at any time we're unable to see their movements, we lose a key indicator of the impact we're having. Desks and tables and seating too close together will block or prevent some body language movements.

There are a number of concerns we need to address in this section on logistics, so for this part, let's use an example that you're speaking at a conference held by your company and that there'll be about one hundred people attending, you're involved in the running

and organisation of the conference as well as being one of the speakers. The first concern is that the audience can see you and the other speakers when you're on stage or at the front of the room. The audience will also need to be able to see the screen or any other visual aids. Some larger rooms have internal pillars for both decoration and roof support and these can be a problem for seating arrangements. If you're booking a room by telephone then ask the question regarding visibility by the audience of the front of the room or stage. Having been a speaker at a venue in Edinburgh in a beautifully decorated room with pillars, I know the problem. Because the room was long and narrow the pillars were a real concern and seating had to be massively rearranged to ensure that everyone could see. Next, you'll need to check out the sound system, can every one hear? Where will you site the loud speakers? Be careful about having too many loud speakers, the different sources of sound can be distracting for audience members. Make certain that the speakers are not too close to the seat otherwise you'll run into the problem that the sound will either be too loud for those who sit close to the speakers and not loud enough for those who sit further away, or that those close to the speakers can hear and those further away are struggling to hear. Once you have about fifty or more people in the room and the event is scheduled to last for a few hours, then I would suggest that you do use a loud speaker system. Whilst it's quite easy to speak to fifty people for a short time without any voice strain, after a few hours, particularly if it's an interactive session when you'll need to call the group to order, your voice may start to show signs of tiredness.

Next, the lighting. Are you going to use natural light or artificial light? Wherever possible, if it doesn't interfere with screen picture quality or visibility, natural light is best, particularly for a long day when the delegates may get sleepy under artificial light. The down side of using natural light is that everyone is tempted to look out of the window and may be distracted by the sights outside.

When you're only speaking at the event and not part of the organising then there are a number of other thoughts to address. Travel arrangements, how will you get to the venue? Will it be necessary go the night before? Probably so if it's far away or you're speaking first thing in the morning. If you're travelling the night before what time will you arrive at the venue? Will you need food arranging? Will you need a car park space reserved for you? The best way to deal with concerns is to have a checklist of those things that need to be checked and as we've done before, we can use Kipling's *six honest serving men* to check that we have covered everything, *what, where, who, when, why* and *how*. What do I need to take with me? Where do I need to go? Who'll be responsible for and whatever is relevant? When do I need to be there? How will I travel? Why am I being asked to speak? This last one should've been answered well before the event! I have a checklist I use before going to any event, it covers such things as laptop, computer disks, clean handkerchief, speaking notes, pens, business cards, flipchart pens, calculator, clock, note pad and, where appropriate, spare bulbs and spares for everything. If you address all the concerns regarding speaking, and have a checklist which you will build up as you do more speaking, then you can be certain that you are properly prepared and this alone will calm any possible nerves you may have felt before, though not now, at speaking up.

Now timing. There are a number of issues you need to address regarding timing. First, the amount of time you need for your speech or session, as we'll discuss when we talk about practice. It takes a number of speaking experiences to realise how much or how little time you really need for what you have to say, and of course, practise will enable you to understand how much time things really do take. You may need to allocate time for questions and answer sessions, you'll certainly need to allocate time for breaks, comfort breaks and tea and coffee breaks. Now here are a couple of tips for you regarding breaks: most seminars and meetings seem to allocate the same amount of time for breaks regardless of some the logistics involved e.g. it will, not surprisingly, take longer to serve tea and coffee to 200 people than it will to 50 people, so you may need to allow more time for the break; it will take longer if people have to serve themselves to tea and coffee from machines or coffee urns than it will if there's staff to serve the tea and coffee; it will take longer to serve coffee to people if there's only one line than if there are two or more lines. Another consideration is the location of the toilets. If the toilets are situated some way from the meeting then it will take longer for people to get there and back. If insufficient time is allocated for breaks, then some people will not get their coffee or have time to visit the facilities and be really peeved when they return. This is not what you're trying to achieve. Give careful thought to how long the breaks for tea and coffee and comfort need to be.

Lunch breaks also need careful planning, and if your event is being held at a busy hotel then having your lunch break at the same time as everyone else could be difficult. If all the conferences and meetings are having lunch at the same time, the hotel staff may be stretched to capacity and not be able to give you the level of service you expect and desire for your people. This is what to do: find out from the hotel conference or meeting office what else is happening on the day, what other meetings are taking place and at what times those meetings and conferences are having their breaks for coffee, tea and lunch. Then arrange for your breaks to be just ahead of the breaks everyone else is having. Have coffee at 10.45am if everyone else is having coffee at 11.00am. Have lunch at 12.45pm till 1.45pm if everyone else is taking lunch from 1pm till 2pm. This way you're assured of the highest level of service the hotel or conference facility can offer and your lunch will be hot and the coffee will be fresh.

Whilst we're on the topic of food and drink, let me add this thought for you; if you're to speak at parties where guests are taking food and drinks from a buffet then if you expect people to applaud after you speak or applaud to welcome a recipient of an award, ensure that they've finished eating from their buffet plates before you start. I've been, and I'm sure you've been, at events when something happened and you were supposed to applaud but with those party plates it was difficult, if not nigh on impossible to clap. Terrible isn't it? When seventy-five people are expected to applaud and only a handful are able to do so! It makes it sound as if no ones agrees with what's been said or doesn't want to congratulate the recipient of the award or the person whose birthday is being celebrated.

Next, if there's to be a number of speakers and you're able to arrange what time you are to speak, then I would suggest just after a break, when everyone will be refreshed, rather than immediately before a break, when everyone is waiting to go to the restroom,

or have a coffee or a cigarette. This is different for professional speakers who may have products to sell at the back of the room and will want to speak just before the breaks so that delegates then have time to visit the speaker's stand. The time of day when you are to be speaking obviously plays its part in your planning and thoughts about timing. If it's a breakfast meeting when you speak then probably part of your job is to ensure that the guests are fully awake. If it's late in the evening it's probably part of your job as a speaker to make sure that they don't fall asleep.

Here are some further thoughts for you on the logistics of an event: you'll need to know if you're a guest that is speaking, who is in charge of the event and who are the organisers and it would be as well also to get a list of the other speakers and some idea of the content of their speeches. Whilst you'll want to be firm about your own point of view it would obviously make sense to ensure you are not at total cross purposes with the message the organisers are trying to put across. How does what you have to say fit in with what the others will say? Will they be using similar, or heaven forbid, the same stories to illustrate a point? Always confirm in writing that you will be attending the meeting or seminar and when you expect to arrive. Give the organisers your mobile number, so that in the event of changes whilst you're travelling to the event they can reach you. There are a number of changes which can disturb any meeting and proper planning prior to the start will ensure that such interruptions are kept to a minimum. Mobile phones ringing can be distracting for some and extremely annoying for others, if it's your meeting then you'll need to make a decision regarding mobile phones. These days I hear more and more requests to turn off all mobiles while the conference or seminar is taking place. Everyone can check their phones in the breaks and sometimes it's quite amusing to see a forest of mobile aerials around the coffee machines.

You'll need to decide on a system for message. A message board outside the meeting room will usually suffice, but if it's a large event then arrangements should be made with the venue organisers, such as the meeting staff of a hotel, for all messages to be passed to the AV (audio visual people) so that they can announce urgent messages should they be received. At most hotels and conference rooms fire drills take place, it's a good idea to check with the staff if a fire drill is scheduled for the time or the day of your meeting and for you or someone else to announce that fact at the start of the day. It's also necessary to point out to all delegates or team members where the fire exits are situated just in case of a real alarm. I was once speaking at a seminar at the Motorcycle Museum in the Midlands in England, the AV man had announced the fact that no fire alarm practice was scheduled for the day, but within ten minutes of that announcement a real alarm rang out. Everyone thought it was a joke and it took some firm control of the 280 delegates to move them out of the two fire exits quickly. The fire brigade arrived after just a couple of minutes, however, it took forty-five minutes for the all clear signal to be given. This forty five minutes could not be caught up on the day so the programme had to be slightly re-scheduled – these things can happen and you have to be prepared to change almost anything at the last moment.

So, there we have it, logistics, room layouts and how different layouts will give a different feel to the meeting or conference, checking everything to make sure that everything works, checking the line of sight, the visuals, the sound, the lighting, making

certain that everyone will have enough space, checking the timings of everything and announcing or have announced such items as break times, fire drills and the use of mobile phones. If you handle or have handled the logistics of the event effectively then you will have improved the chances that nothing is left to chance, you'll have also improved the chance of everyone hearing what you have to say, free from interruptions and thoughts about anything else. This way you'll create the right atmosphere for you to stand and speak up for yourself.

Of all the numerous and varied parts of your presentation that will make a major difference as to how you're perceived as an effective speaker, more than any other, your opening and closing are without doubt the most important. Over the course of this section, I'll give you some concrete guidelines on the following points: How to write your first opening, how to write your second opening, how to write your third opening and yes, there are three openings which need to be done. Ten things the opening should do. Ten ways to open. Ten expressions to avoid in the opening. These are the words and phrases most often used by inexperienced speakers, which rob their talks and presentations of power and believability. Six ways to close your speech and four endings to avoid. When you've listened to this section and mastered the art of opening and closing a talk, a speech or a presentation then, every time you speak on any occasion, you'll create an impact with what you say and your reputation as a speaker and generally will be massively enhanced.

So, let's start by looking at openings. There are three openings you should use in any presentation, called simply: the first opening, the second opening and the third opening. The first opening will grab the audience's attention, the second opening will be based on the old expression *Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell 'em it, and tell 'em what you told 'em*. The third opening will be a teaser or benefit and will include stating the rules for your speech. So, the first opening; these are the first few words you say. It must be a practised set of words or phrases that will immediately grab the audience's attention. This opening will do a number of different things; here are ten thoughts for the first opening:

- 1) Set the scene: the audience must know where you're going to take them and if you set the scene correctly then they'll gladly follow along the journey you've outlined.
- 2) Break preoccupation: the audience members may at the start of your talk be thinking about any number of things, the previous speaker's presentation, the conversation they had in the coffee break or over dinner, or even why am I here? Your first few words need to be break any preoccupation that they have with any other thoughts.
- 3) No pressure: the audience must know either from your first opening or the words you subsequently say that there will be no undue pressure from you. This may be that in a training meeting you explain that any role plays will only be done in small groups and not in front of the whole meeting; it may be that you explain that they will have a choice as to the actions they decide to take following your talk. They must feel that any pressure you apply is warranted.
- 4) Make them listen; the words and phrases you say must make the audience want to sit up and want to listen. They may have just been listening to a boring speaker, it may be the session just after lunch or the last session of the day, and until you tell

them why they should listen they have no motivation to do so. Remember that *away motivation* is a powerful process and indicating what the audience may be missing out on until they hear what you have to say should satisfy this point of making them want to listen.

- 5) Make them feel important: *you have to be believed to be heard* and not the other way around. One of the easiest ways to build rapport with another person or group of people is to show respect for them and their opinions; in other words, if you're able to find a way to make them feel important without sounding as if it's flattery then they're more likely to want to listen to what you have to say to them or share with them.
- 6) Set the purpose: if you set the purpose of the talk you are to give, the audience will know that you're serious and be more likely to listen carefully to what you have to say. The purpose of your speech or talk or presentation must focus on the benefit the audience will receive if they take the time and the effort to listen to what you have to say.
- 7) Set the timing: when you begin to speak the audience will not know, unless they've been told by the person who introduced you, or a written programme of events, how long you may be speaking for. So, that they understand the length of the journey you'll take them on, it's necessary to tell them how long you're speaking for. If your speech is just before lunch then they'll expect you to finish on time; in fact, finishing on time is essential. So often, unfortunately, speakers in the widest possible sense of that word overrun their allotted time and this plays havoc with any event, social or commercial.

Some seminars I've attended over the last few years have been run on flexible timings, where sessions have gone on for six hours at a stretch and, yes, this can work as long as the audience is aware that this is to be the case. When an audience is unaware of the timings, they don't know what to do and how to behave regarding time. The very confident ones will get up and leave, go to the restroom or go for a coffee. The majority will sit there in silence and then grumble like anything at the next break, so, whatever the occasion let the audience know the timing of your speech. At a social event timings may be less critical, nevertheless, be aware of how long the audience has been sitting. They may be really interested to hear what you have to say but if they've sat through three other speakers who've already used the previous one and a half-hours then the audience will be ready for a break.

- 8) Open the files: one of the best ways to get another person or a group of people to focus on what you have to tell them is to *open the files in their minds*. This is important to do for a number of reasons. First, so that they remember more easily what you've said. Second, that they are thinking in the right mode or mood and third, so that they understand more easily what you've said. You open the files in somebody's mind by simply asking questions. Let me give you an example. *Who here enjoys playing or watching football?* This question would get everyone opening the file labelled *Football* in their mind even if they didn't like football. Whenever we answer a question posed by someone else or even if it's rhetorical question that we hear, the mind is opened in order to answer that question. This is the easiest way to get the files open either in one person's mind or in the mind of everyone in the audience.

The challenge we have with this knowledge is that now you'll have to think very

carefully about the questions you ask. Why? Because every time you ask the audience a question, every member of the audience will answer the question in their mind and be opening a file and entering a different mode or mood because of that open file. Let's go back to the football question for a moment – for anyone who loves football then the question, *Who here enjoys playing or watching football?* will open their football file and put them in a positive mood and mode. They may now be thinking, *Oh! Great! We're going to discuss football;* you may even see them sit more upright in their seat. On the other hand for the person who detests football, they'll still open their football file and then be in a negative mood and mode. Using such expressions in their self-talk as *Oh! No! We're not going to talk about football, are we?* you may even see them slump in their seat as their body language clearly indicates their thought pattern. Let me give you another example: You start a meeting by saying that *Today we're going to discuss the company car policy. Are you happy with your company car?* You would understand that some people have positive thoughts about this and some people will have negative thoughts. By asking the question *Are you happy with your company car?* you've opened the company car file in everybody's mind. Be careful with the questions you ask, remember every question will be automatically answered. What mood or mode do you want the audience to be in? You can control that with the questions you ask. Obviously this is very important in your opening: if you want the audience to be in a positive mode and mood then ask questions to which you know they'll have positive answers. E.g. you're talking to the sales force of your company and start by asking *We'd all like to increase our commissions wouldn't we, especially if we had to make no additional sales calls to do it?* That question ought to have all but the most cynical at least sit up and start to pay attention as their minds answer *Yes* to the question, and their file labelled *Sales commissions* is well and truly opened.

- 9) The opening can establish your credibility and when you're speaking to a group who you do not know, then it will be necessary to state why they should believe you. These may be stories of what you've accomplished, this is perhaps the easiest way, or a list of areas in which you've been involved. If you want people to take action with what you've said, then they need to feel that you're speaking from experience and not just sprouting some ill conceived ideas which have not been tested in the real world. One of the greatest gripes I hear in the training industry is from delegates who moan about trainers who haven't actually used the methods and ideas that they suggest those who are being trained should use. Establish your credibility either through your introduction by another person or by a few well-chosen words from yourself at the start of the speech or presentation.
- 10) Wake them up: the opening should certainly re-awaken any audience member who may have gone to sleep. Perhaps the room is too warm, perhaps the previous speaker was boring, perhaps it's late in the evening. Whatever the reason why some members may be asleep or sleepy it's your job to wake them up. One of the easiest ways to re-awaken an audience is to get them to talk. This can be a brief *networking session* before you speak, introducing it as follows: *Before we get into the main part of my presentation today, perhaps you should take a few moments to get to know each other better. Take a few moments now and meet at least two people you haven't met before.* This is a common start to many seminars and it's used because it works extremely well, the audience has the chance to get comfortable with speaking in the room and the



atmosphere is certainly more lively than without networking. You may decide to use the networking session after your main opening.

So, there are ten thoughts on the first opening: set the scene, break their preoccupation, indicate there will be no pressure, make them listen or want to listen, make them feel important, set the purpose, set the timings, open the right files, establish credibility and wake them up. When you've written your first opening for any speech or presentation you have to give, then check that opening against those ten thoughts. Now let me give you a further ten ideas for the ways to open a speech:

- 1) Silence – Silence can be a very strong opening, by simply looking around the audience and catching everyone's eye, whilst you wait for absolute silence before you start speaking. Certainly five seconds of silence before you begin is a great habit to form. I remember being at a presentation where the speaker was to talk about time management; he started by standing and looking at the audience for a full minute before he uttered a single word. It was a very powerful opening particularly when he went on to say how long a minute really is, it seemed more like five minutes. People were starting to shuffle about, smiling at each other and wondering what on earth was happening. So silence can be a great start.
- 2) A story – If the story is relevant to the occasion and has a strong message contained within it, then it can make a great opening. Here is one of the best story openings I've ever heard. A presenter walked onto stage dragging behind him a six-foot tall paper mâché dinosaur; the audience of about 200 people looked up and were astounded to see this life-like model. The presenter said nothing; he then took out his briefcase and from it took a small white mouse, which he allowed to run around his fingers for a few moments, and then put the mouse back, looked at the audience and said nothing. Moving to his flipchart he wrote in large letters, *The RC Factor*, and turning to the audience he began as follows: You can imagine that it is twenty million years ago and we've been asked to place a wager. *We have to place a bet as to whether it will be the dinosaur or the mouse, which will survive for the next twenty million years. Well I'm sure we'd all agree we'd have placed our bet on the dinosaur, this terrible lizard, and not the wee timorous beastie, the mouse, and yet we would have been wrong. Why? Because the dinosaur,* he said, turning and looking at his flipchart for a moment, *suffered, turning back to look at the audience, from the RC Factor, the dinosaur was resistant to change, yes, resistant to change. Today we're going to talk about change.* Well what a great way to start a discussion on change! Perhaps if in your business you have the need to have a discussion about change, you might use that story.

A friend and client of mine, having heard me use the story some years ago, had one of the people in his company, who was good at art, paint large pictures of a dinosaur and a mouse which he used with this story to start a team meeting where he was going to talk about a change in the company's way of working. It was very well received and set the scene perfectly. No one would want to think of themselves as a dinosaur would they? If there's a good story that you know could be personalised to make a good point at the start of what you have to say, then use it. Throughout the ages mankind has used stories to pass on information and most people I've found like a good story, well told, that makes a good point.

- 3) A question – As I previously stated a good question can open the files in the mind so a well thought-out question can be a powerful opening.
- 4) A well-practised paragraph – You know that the opening and its impact on the audience is critical and it's therefore essential that your opening is well rehearsed. A paragraph that can be used for almost any occasion is a good thing write and learn. The one I use is this *Good morning, I'm delighted to be with you and to have the opportunity to share with you some of my tried and tested and proven ideas on how we can be...* and then I add whatever is relevant to the occasion. Now of course, this one couldn't be used for a wedding or a party but it works well for all commercial meetings. I suggest that you adjust this one or write a new one for yourself that you can use on the times when you're suddenly asked to speak. If you have your opening then most of the problems of starting a speech and of nerves are eradicated. Start with your practised opening and then begin asking questions of the audience.
- 5) A phrase or saying – Another great way to start a talk or a speech or a presentation is a good phrase or saying, e.g. and again talking about change, *Charles Darwin once said it's not the strongest of the species nor the biggest which survive, it is the one most responsive to change. Well today ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to share some ideas with you which will make absolutely certain that we do survive.*
- 6) A joke – If the joke is appropriate and you're able to tell it well then this can make a really great opening to any speech or presentation. The challenge with using a joke as the opening is that some people may not find the joke funny or may be offended by the joke. If you have any idea whatsoever that this could happen then avoid using a joke. Often I have seen presenters use the classic opening of *The last time I gave this it was at the local prison, so apologies to those who've already heard it.* This can work well on social occasions but it is probably the wrong opening for a commercial meeting.
- 7) The shiny object – If you're able to base your speech or presentation around a physical object and can bring that object onto stage, hidden in a box, then you'll intrigue the audience. But take care! I've seen presentations where the idea of using a shiny object has been overused, it didn't build rapport with the audience. Far from it, it destroyed rapport as the audience felt that a technique had been used on them. Any prop can be considered as a shiny object.
- 8) The figures opening – This can be a very effective opening provided the figures are not complicated. As you will see or have seen on the video part of this programme, the use of icons is far more effective when giving figures to your audience. Let me give you an example of a figures opening *Seven out of ten people in this company are probably underpaid* – you can imagine that each member of the audience will probably think they're in the seven you quoted.
- 9) Current affairs – I make it a habit to watch or read the news on the morning of the day on which I'll be speaking in case there's a relevant news story which I can blend into the talk or speech I'm giving. This can be a useful addition to any speech and on the basis that most members of the audience will probably have seen or heard the news on that morning you can create an instant link. This link will assist their memory of what you've said and indicate that you're up to date with your information. If you're able to make a direct link between the news item and your talk, then this will prove to be a very powerful opening.

10) Historical fact – Early in the programme I mentioned the idea of using a book of dates, with the rider that you need to be careful that this is not a too structured opening. That said, an appropriate historical fact can be a very useful start to any presentation or speech. The Blondin story, which I used, has the exact date and the detail contained within it and is therefore an historical fact and story close, which could also be used as an historical fact opening.

Now let's look at the second opening. During the second opening you'll tell the audience what you're going to tell them; at this stage it would only be a summary of what you're going to say, in other words an overview of the journey on which you'll take them. Let me give you an example. *Over the course of the next hour together I'll cover for you three specific ways in which we're able to reduce our expenditure on motor vehicles.* This short sentence clearly tells people what will happen over the course of the speech or presentation, and you may decide to add in benefits at this stage, albeit I would normally leave benefits until the third opening.

So, let's look at the third opening. The purpose of the third opening is to really open the audience's minds. This third opening really needs to include a teaser or a benefit and most importantly, tell them your rules regarding questions. Let's look first at the teaser or benefit. As I've previously said the audience is tuned into one radio station *WIFM (What's in it for me)*. There are two ways in which you can indicate to the audience what's in it for them: One of them is *away motivated* and one of them is *towards motivated*; you can tell them what they'll miss out on and you can tell them how they'll benefit by listening actively to what you have to say. It is imperative that you tell the audience, however large or small it may be, your rules for questions. If you miss out on this point, it's likely that an audience member will ask a question at an inappropriate moment and may spoil the whole thrust of your presentation. You need to decide precisely when you want the questions. Do you want questions throughout the presentation when anyone feels it is necessary to ask you for further explanation of a particular point or do you want a question and answer session at the end of your speech?

Some years ago I saw an inexperienced presenter fail to make a simple statement regarding the timing of questions. She'd only just started her presentation when an audience member put up their hand and asked a question. This unnerved the presenter to such an extent that she lost her place and was really quite embarrassed. Now perhaps the audience member should've known better but the presenter should have made the rules clear: whenever you have to speak, particularly commercially, make absolutely certain that you state in your third opening when questions can be asked. This is what to say:

"As I don't have a lot of time with you today then, unfortunately, there will be no time for questions so please see me in the coffee break if you have a specific question" or "If you have any questions as I go through the ideas today, please stop me and ask me at any time" or

"There are a number of things to be covered today which I'm certain will prompt questions in your mind. I'd be pleased if you'd leave any questions until the question and answer session at the end of my presentation." So there we have it, three different openings. The first opening used as I stated to grab the audience's attention. The

second opening to tell the audience what you'll tell them and the third opening is to include a teaser or benefit and state your rules for asking questions. Now let me give you some ideas on ten things you shouldn't do:

- 1) Apologise - If you start your presentation by apologising for anything, you're starting the wrong way. Don't apologise for the temperature of the room, the length of the coffee break, the fact that it's sunny outside or anything else.
- 2) Under no circumstances whatsoever mention that you are nervous at the prospect of speaking. This does not build rapport with an audience; it reinforces your internal programme that you have nerves and does you no good whatsoever! If you're demonstrating your nerves in any way, the audience will know and there's little point in confirming that fact for them.
- 3) Negative stories - I've suggested to you that a story makes a great opening and so it does, however, a negative story will put the audience in a negative mode or mood. Avoid negative stories.
- 4) Do not tell the audience that you're not used to speaking in public. Such expressions as *I'm not used to doing this so you'll have to forgive me for being useless* is not a good opening and it must be avoided.
- 5) Avoid the use of the word *Sorry*.
- 6) Avoid telling the audience that you're not prepared to stand and speak. In the event that you're a last minute replacement for a speaker then leave it to the person who introduced you to tell the audience when you've finished speaking that you were a last minute stand-in and what a brilliant job you've done. Telling the audience in the opening that you've not had time to prepare what you're going to say will not *open the right files* or give any credibility to your presentation.
- 7) Avoid the use of the words *um* and *er*. So many speeches, presentations and talks these days start with the word *um*. This is to be avoided at all times, particularly the long drawn out *uuuummmm* so often heard.
- 8) Avoid looking at your slides or flipchart whilst talking. When you look away from the audience, unless you're wearing a microphone, they'll not be able to hear you clearly.
- 9) If you have the occasion to speak from stage and have notes from which you'll speak then my strong suggestion to you is as follows: Never, ever carry your speech notes onto the stage in your hand. If you're using 3"x5" cards then yes, they can be carried in an inside pocket. It's far better to have arranged for your notes to be on the lectern or table and then walk on empty-handed. This looks far more professional.
- 10) Avoid saying, *Can you hear me at the back? OK?* This is very unprofessional, as you should know if the people at the back are able to hear you and have checked that fact prior to speaking. You'll soon realise from the audience's body language if those seated at the back of the room are unable to hear you.

So there we have it. Ten things that must be avoided: don't apologise, don't mention nerves, don't use negative stories, don't say *I'm not use to speaking in public*, don't say *sorry*, don't say you're not prepared, don't use *um*, don't look at the slides, don't carry your notes on the stage and don't say *Can you hear me at the back?*

Now, let's look at the closing of your speech, your presentation or your talk as Lord Mancroft once said *A speech is like a love affair, any fool can start one but to end it takes considerable skill*. The closing is the last and lasting impression that you'll make on the audience members and because of this fact, it's probably better to write your closing before you write anything else. The first thing you need to decide with regard to the closing of your speech is whether or not you will be having a question and answer session. If you decide to have a Q & A then you'll need two closes. The first one will close the main part of your speech and the second one will be the main close following the question and answer session. Whatever you do, do not, I repeat do not, finish any speech, any talk or any presentation with only a question and answer session, you must have a main close following that question and answer session. A closing argument, a closing summary or a closing story to finish the whole talk. The purpose of the close is either to summarise what you've said or in many circumstances call the audience to action. Here are six ideas regarding the close:

- 1) A story – One of the best ways to close any talk is with a story. You'll see my use of the story close on the video. If the story contains good detail and having practised it you can deliver it with passion, then there is no better ending. On the last side of this programme I've given you a number of great stories which you can personalise for your use in closing any speech or presentation.
- 2) A joke – As I explained in the opening section, a joke can work well for the opening or the closing. The same rules apply for the closing when using a joke. The joke must be appropriate to the audience, it must be a clean joke, it must help you to make the point you wish to make at the end of your talk.
- 3) The three-ender close – I always, always use a *three-ender close* at the end of every presentation or talk that I give. It's also a brilliant way to close a talk following a great story. The three-ender close does a number of different things: it provides a smooth ending to what you've said, it maintains the *three rhythm* we discussed in the opening and it's the best way to prompt applause. The three-ender close is when you use the same expression or the same word in three consecutive sentences. Here are a number of examples: *It's been a pleasure to be with you today, it's been a pleasure to share my ideas with you and I know it will be a pleasure to be with you again, thank you*. This repeated use of the word *pleasure* is a perfect example of the three-ender close. Here are some more: *Today has been a useful exercise in team work, today has been a useful exercise in communication and today has an extremely useful exercise in building our tomorrows; The marketplace has been dominated by second rate goods, the marketplace has been dominated by second rate players, but those days have gone, for tomorrow the marketplace will be dominated by first rate goods and ourselves as a first rate supplier; Not only will the new system improve efficiency, not only will the new system improve effectiveness but the new system will prove profitable*. You can hear the power of this three-ender close for yourself, and I'd strongly suggest that you use a three-ender close on every speaking opportunity.

Let me also at this point give you a couple of key ideas regarding closing. If your three-ender close is designed to prompt people to action and prompt applause for the speech that you've given them, you need to ensure that you are the last person to speak. I remember some years ago at a company meeting, I had a great opening, good content, and a well-written and well-practised three-ender close. I launched

into my close and at the end everyone was motivated to take action. One of the directors of the company wanted to say a few words and it was my fault that I'd not given him the opportunity to do so during the meeting, and unfortunately what he had to say was somewhat negative in content and delivery,

"Will the members of the sales force please realise once and for all that their commission cheques will not be paid unless they complete form A73 and hand it back to the accounts department by the last day of the month". You can imagine the effect of this comment on the members of the sales team; they were totally 'negged' out, after having been built up during my rousing speech.

If you find yourself in a position where you're the person to end the meeting then ask if anyone has anything else to say before you launch into your three-ender close. A three-ender close will certainly prompt applause, and I see and hear politicians and other public speakers using this method time and time and time again. Here is my professional speakers tip: if the three-ender close you've used was so powerful or emotional that the audience was stunned into silence, and it can happen, then someone has to start the applause. It can be you, turning your back to the audience for a brief moment you start to clap, everyone will follow suit. Here is now a different example of a three-ender close and it uses the power of consequences. You point out to the audience the consequence of taking action, you point out to the audience the consequence of not taking action and then ask an *alternative closing question*. An alternative closing question is where you assume that the people listening to you will make a decision and you simply ask them which decision they wish to make e.g. *We can do nothing and leave the current system in place which we know will create long term problems or we can take the plunge now and invest in a new system with all the benefits we've discussed over the last few hours. Now is the time to decide, which way would you like to go.*

- 4) A call to action – If you decided that the purpose of your speech or talk is to make the audience take a particular action then not asking them to take the action would be a mistake. State quite clearly exactly what you want them to do: if you want them to make a decision ask them to make a decision, if you want them to change something they've been doing in the past then ask them to change it. If you want them to vote on a particular subject then ask them to vote, if you miss out this important point then the audience will be left in limbo, not quite knowing exactly what you want them to do.
- 5) Sometimes when you've finished your close, you'll need to pass on to the next speaker. Make absolutely certain that you leave a substantial pause in-between your closing and the introduction to the next person. Don't bring your close and the introduction together.
- 6) Thank you – At the end of every speech, talk or presentation it's only polite to say thank you. These words are a great ending after the three-ender: *It's been a pleasure to be with you today, it's been a pleasure to share my tried and tested and proven ideas with you and I know it will be a pleasure to be with you again, thank you.*

Here are four things to avoid when closing your talk. Remember the close needs to come at an appropriate moment, after all you must stop speaking before the audience stops listening. So avoid these:

- 1) Abrupt ending – Many speeches and presentations I've seen over the years just came to an abrupt end and the audience was left not knowing if the speech had finished. This is not the way to do it.
- 2) Look around for help – This does not end it well. You have to be in control or at least appear to be in control.
- 3) Avoid ending a speech without preparation – As I've mentioned to you on a number of occasions the close is a critical part of your presentation and must be rehearsed to the point where you could say it in your sleep.
- 4) Avoid staying on too long after you've finished. Once you've received the applause you deserve then leave the speaking area.

If you find yourself sitting at a speakers' table with a number of other speakers at an event you need to be extremely careful regarding what you do and what you say, both before you speak and after you speak. Remember you will be on view. Avoid talking to the other speakers while someone else is speaking and particularly avoid speaking to the other speakers just after you have finished speaking. They may wish to give you praise about the content or style of your delivery, this is not the time to receive it. Simply nod politely and smile and get into conversation at the next break. The audience will definitely be watching you immediately after you sit down.

So there we have it, openings and closings. Over the course of this section of the programme we've covered a great number of things: the three openings you need to use, telling the audience what you'll tell them *telling 'em it and then telling 'em what you've told 'em*, setting the scene and purpose of your talk, making certain that you include a benefit for the audience and telling them when questions can be asked, avoid apologising or mentioning nerves and of course, for the closing, be properly prepared and being properly rehearsed. The opening and closing are critical to the success of your presentation. If you take the time to write a good open and close, if you take the time to practise and if you take the time to deliver what you say clearly, concisely and confidently, you will succeed on any speaking occasion.

Over this next section of the programme I'd like to share with you a number of ideas regarding questions. Questions are perhaps the most powerful way of communicating, so during this section we'll talk about when to deal with questions, rhetorical questions, asking questions of a presenter or when you are the presenter, asking questions of the audience and a number of key areas for exactly how to deal with questions throughout your presentations, your talks or your speeches. By understanding when to deal with questions, how to deal with questions and where to deal with questions, you'll be better prepared for any surprises the questions can present. You'll be more confident as a presenter and know you're totally in control of yourself, the audience and the timing of the event. So let's start and look at questions.

Questions to the audience and the answers you receive are great feedback on your presentation, and as I've explained before, it's absolutely essential that you decide whether or not you're going to take questions throughout your speech or at the end of your speech or a mixture of these two timings. If you decide to take questions throughout your speech, there are a number of advantages and disadvantages. Let's

look first at the advantages: if you're prepared to accept that the audience has your permission to ask questions throughout your presentation then you're clearly indicating that you are confident. This confidence will increase the audience's belief in what you have to say and it also clearly indicates that you have a wide knowledge on the subject about which you're talking because if you didn't you obviously wouldn't be prepared to answer questions on the subject. It's a clear demonstration of your personal power, by being prepared to answer questions throughout your presentation; you're saying to the audience that you are a strong personality and prepared to tackle any difficult question or situation.

Perhaps an additional advantage of handling questions throughout the presentation is that you get the opportunity to deal with difficult people. You and I know, that particularly in commercial meetings, some people use the meeting as an opportunity to be as difficult as possible or to demonstrate their knowledge or disagreement with the current way of doing things. Now you can use this opportunity to deal with these difficult people. I'm not suggesting that for one moment you purposely create problems in order to be able to put people down, far from it. I am suggesting that if you have difficult people then an open meeting where you deal with them fairly but firmly will give others a firm understanding of your leadership style.

Additional advantages of taking questions throughout the presentation are these: as you're talking about a particular idea, no doubt others will be having the same thoughts as you. This is precisely what you'd expect and what you'd wish for. If they're having the same thoughts, then they're probably having some questions in their minds, and when someone has a question in his or her mind then this can be the best time to answer the question. Answering someone's question may lead to the expansion of the ideas you've been putting forward. I've found on many occasions, particularly in short presentations, that the audience wish to expand on one idea rather than be briefly exposed to ten or more ideas. This opportunity would not have been presented if I'd not been prepared to take questions throughout the presentation. It can be dangerous leaving the answering of questions to the end of your speech as the audience members may have those questions, particularly negative questions, in the forefront of their minds and therefore not be listening actively to exactly what it is you're saying.

Questions enable you to be interactive with the audience and also present the opportunity to build rapport. When you listen to the audience members asking their questions then you get to hear the language they use. Are they using visual language? Auditory language or kinaesthetic language? Are they high detailed people? Are they more *towards* or *away motivated*? It is only by hearing the audience members speak that you learn this fascinating information about them, which you can use with honesty and integrity to build massive subconscious rapport.

The disadvantages of taking questions throughout your presentation are unfortunately also many. Taking questions at any time can break the flow of the information you're providing and so you can break the flow in the audience's mind and your mind. Inexperienced presenters often find that questions push them right off the track. You can imagine that if you're explaining a particularly complicated concept to the audience



and a member of the audience stands and starts to ask you a question, you may well have to go back to the start of your explanation in order to make it clear for everyone else what you were saying. When you decide to take questions throughout your presentation you're also putting at risk the timing of your speech, your practise, rehearsal and preparation may indicate that you're to speak for half an hour. You've allowed let's say five minutes for questions throughout the presentation, however, one particularly garrulous member of the audience decides to use the opportunity in order to put forward their view of life as well as the company's philosophy. Naturally you'll have to be firm with this person and ensure that they get to the point of their question so they don't use valuable minutes of your presentation for which you've not allocated the time.

It's often the case that lengthy questions can annoy other audience members. I'm certain that you've been at the same meetings or similar meetings to the ones I've attended where there are certain members of the audience who take it upon themselves to monopolise the questioning opportunities – this can be a major disadvantage to allowing questions throughout your presentation. Another disadvantage is that the questions may come out of sequence with your planned talk or speech. I've certainly seen and experienced questions which have used some of the ideas and stories I'd planned to use later in the presentation and I had to be quick off the mark to prevent the questioner using some of my main ideas. You may have a particular story you wish to use as your three-ender close and if a member of the audience in one their questions starts to indicate that they know the story then you need to make a quick decision as to whether or not you will allow them to continue with what they want to say.

Now lets look at the advantages and disadvantages of having question time at the end of the presentation. First, the advantages. Because the audience knows from your third opening that there will be a question and answer session at the end of your presentation, during your talk they can jot down notes as to the questions they'd like to ask you. It may well be that questions prompted in their minds at the start of your presentation are answered by you during the rest of the presentation and therefore the audience members do not need to ask about a particular thing. It'll be obvious to you from the body language of the audience when you've made certain points with which they either disagree or have a concern and may wish to ask you questions in the question and answer session. This gives you clear warning of the type of questions you will receive. Taking questions at the end your presentation is helpful for timing. Let's say you have to speak for twenty-five minutes and allow a five-minute question and answer session at the end of your talk. You now know that have you have to speak for exactly twenty five minutes and then hand over to the audience for a further five minutes for questions and answers. The last one minute will obviously be for your main closing story or jokes or summary, but if unfortunately the audience members do not have any questions to ask you then you've only got to use up a small part of presentation time. This is why it's necessary to have at hand, or should I say in your mind, additional information with which you can expand on your ideas. Another advantage of taking questions at the end is that you're able to keep your powder dry. It may well be that during a short presentation you're unable to have the time to expand on the ideas that you share with

the audience members, however, during a question and answer session you may well have the opportunity for expansion and clarification.

One obvious disadvantage to having a question and answer session is this; nobody asks any questions. If this happens to you there are a couple of ways to get around the problem. Have prepared questions of your own which you can answer by starting with the following words: *One of the questions often asked in these situations is this...* and then you state the question and give your answer. The other way is to have a stooge in the audience, someone who has been prompted to ask questions at the start of your question and answer session. This technique, idea or method is often used, not so that it will only be seeded questions that you're asked but simply to get the ball rolling. If you find you have to stand up and speak up on many occasions then I would suggest that you have a series of prepared questions that you can provide to the organisers of the meeting or event, so that various audience members can in advance be prompted to start the questions at the question and answer session.

One of the challenges or disadvantages when deciding to have questions at the end is that, through your enthusiasm for your subject, you can use all your allotted time and leave no time for the questions – this can be a difficult situation if you've already told the audience members that you're going to have a question and answer session. Your question and answer session at the end of your speech may be monopolised by one person. Another disadvantage is that the question may contain criticism hidden within it and there may not be enough time left at the end of your talk to deal effectively with that criticism. In fact, perhaps the greatest problem in leaving questions until the end is that you may be asked a really good question which will lead you into an area which you wish to talk on and which the audience wish to hear about and you simply run out of time. Take a great deal of care if you decide to have questions at the end to allow yourself enough time to deliver the real ending of your speech.

I can remember a particular presentation a few months ago when at the end of the question and answer session had been requested by my client for the end of my presentation, the chairman of the meeting rose to thank me for my presentation and I had yet to deliver the Blondin story and my powerful three-ender call to action close. I had very gently, using only body language, to indicate to the chairman to take his seat and leave me a few more moments to deliver my ending. This was entirely my fault as I should've explained to the chairman that I would be doing one further close after the question and answer session.

So to summarise this section about timing, it must be a conscious decision on your part as to whether to take questions throughout your talk or decide to have them at the end in a structured question and answer format or to have no questions at all. You must decide on the rules and let the audience know how to play the game.

Now let's talk about rhetorical questions, very powerful tools used in communication when *speaking up*. A rhetorical question is one which you do not wish the audience members to answer, such questions as: *Wouldn't it be great if the sun shone every single day of our lives?* Now whether or not this would be great is open to debate, however, you do

not wish every member of the audience to shout out the answer *Yes, do you?* Far from it, you're simply asking the question in order to get the audience to think in a particular way. A side issue of rhetorical questions is to use a technique similar to the one you would use in asking yourself questions in the question and answer session. You could say,

"Someone recently asked if the new system was capable of coping with an increase in the volume we write." This is a great way of making some of your points. If you know that the audience is likely to ask a specific question and you can think prior to your speaking event what the question might be, then you give out the answer without actually being asked the question by the use of *Somebody recently asked me ...* You'll recall that earlier we discussed the idea of the power of metaphor and that stating information as though someone else had said it was an extremely effective way of giving information to audience members and which was unlikely to have them question it to the same extent as if it was only said by you. This *Somebody recently asked me ...* is a similar method based on the same idea.

One of the key problems with rhetorical questions is that if you leave a gap following the question, even a short silence, you may find that the audience do not realise it is a rhetorical question and want to give you an answer. On my various seminars I often use a closing story about two frogs, the story is actually entitled *Once upon a Time there were Two Frogs* and I'll tell you the whole story, which is a brilliant attitude story, on slide twenty-four. However at the end of the story I ask a rhetorical question which is *How did he manage to do it?* Having used the story many, many times occasionally a member of the audience would shout out an idea for an answer to the question 'how did he do it? Well some of the answers were extremely funny and certainly indicated that an interactive session was taking place, but they did have the effect of spoiling the ending of the story. By these experiences I've found a way to deal with the problem. Now when I ask a rhetorical question and before I give the answer, I want the audience to think about the question and therefore need to leave a pause for that thinking time ... This is how I do it. I ask the question and then tell the audience that I'll give them the answer. This is how it goes. *How did he manage to do it? I'll tell you ...* By using the expression *I'll tell you* the audience knows that they should not shout out an answer. If you're going to use the power of rhetorical questions then think about how quickly you'll give the audience the answer to the question. If you feel you need to leave a dramatic pause in order to get the audience to think about the answer, albeit you don't want them to answer the question out loud, then use the same idea of *I'll tell you*.

Now let's examine dealing with questions raised by the audience. When a member of the audience asks you a question, then it is essential that you do not interrupt that question and let them finish what they want to say. This applies to most questions being asked, although unfortunately, as I mentioned before, some people use the question to engage in a monologue about the meaning of life. This questioner should definitely be interrupted, albeit politely and firmly. I remember at a seminar some years when microphones were situated around the room in a seminar that one person took it into his head to use the question time opportunity to sell his product range to the audience. Whilst in this particular seminar it was acceptable to clearly state the type of business you were in, it was not acceptable to use the opportunity as a full blown pitch

and therefore this was one of the rare occasions when as a presenter it was necessary for me to interrupt the questioner. As the presenter or person giving the talk you have to be totally in control of the audience. Letting one person monopolise the question and answer session, and not dealing with it, will destroy your credibility with the audience.

In the same vein as listening to the question, make certain that you do not end the question for the questioner, and listen carefully to the whole question. Whilst the questioner is asking the question you need to use a technique called *rapid repeat*. This is how to use it. Scientists tell us that for about eleven seconds or so, our minds talk to us, our heads are often filled with irrelevant chatter. Because of this fact it's easy to see why people struggle with active listening. The rapid repeat technique overcomes this problem. When someone talks, all you simply need to do is repeat exactly what they've said, yes, exactly what they've said in your mind a few seconds after they've said their words, e.g. it would, *it would*, be necessary, *be necessary*, to hear, *to hear*, exactly, *exactly*, what they, *what they*, have said, *have said*. Whilst this technique of rapid repeating takes a little while to perfect it is perhaps the best listening technique I've ever learnt. Certainly it's use as a presenter when listening to someone ask a question has been a major advantage for me. The technique has two major benefits. First, when you're using rapid repeat you'll find that your concentration on the person talking is at an extremely high level. You'll really be focused on them and the words they say, so this is obviously beneficial. Secondly, you'll recall more of what they said, and it'll be brilliant, as you realise these are two major benefits.

Once the questioner has asked the question and you've used the rapid repeat technique to soak up the information and really understand the question they've asked without your internal dialogue getting in the way, then it's a good idea to repeat the question so that each member of the audience can hear it before you give the answer. It is particularly important in a large meeting where you take questions from someone close to the front, as very often, even when microphones are provided for audience members to ask their question, those at the front will ignore the microphones simply because they know they're close enough for you to be able to hear the question. When this happens it's essential that you repeat the question so that every member of the audience can hear. When you repeat the question make certain, absolutely certain that you use the exact words used by the questioner. Do not paraphrase the question – parrot phrase the question, in other words say exactly what the questioner said. Once you're comfortable with the rapid repeat method you'll find that you're easily able to do this. The best way to practise the rapid repeat method is when you are the third party to a conversation, as in this third party position there is no pressure to be involved in the conversation and therefore it's an ideal practise opportunity. You can also practise rapid repeat listening to audiotapes in the car or any spoken dialogue.

Once the questioner has finished asking the question it's both polite and necessary to say thank you. You may say *That's a good question* or *Good point*. However, be careful of creating a habit for yourself by always using the same expression to thank a questioner for asking the question. I've seen presentations where a number of questions were asked and the presenter on each and every occasion responded with *That's a good question*. By the time he'd used this expression three times, everybody perceived that it

was a false expression. The reason you'll thank the questioner in some way for asking the question is that not only is it polite, it also compliments the questioner and makes them more open to receive your answer. If you and I were at a presentation and you'd decided to ask the presenter a question and he or she responded with *Well that's a pretty stupid question but nevertheless I'll answer*, imagine how you would feel! You'd probably not be open to the answer they were about to give. Whilst not many presenters will respond with *That's a stupid question*, many do so unfortunately with their tonality and by the body language they use. So, thank the questioner, honestly and sincerely, for the question and ensure that under no circumstances do you put down the questioner in any way, either by the look on your face, the tonality of the words you use, or the body language you exhibit.

Now you've carefully listened using rapid repeat of the question being asked, you've thanked the questioner, you've repeated the question so that every member of the audience knows what's been asked, now you give your answer. If you find that one person monopolises question time by asking a number of questions, then the way to deal with it is simply to avoid eye contact with that person. The person will soon get the message that you do not wish them to ask any further questions. If a question asked is irrelevant to either the meeting, the audience or the situation then simply say so using a version of the following words; *Unfortunately, whilst that's a good question it's outside the scope of what we're here to discuss. Does anybody else have a question?* This is certainly a firm way to deal with irrelevant questions. If you wish to do it in a softer way then you'd simply say *That's a good question. However the answer will take more time than we have allocated today.* Again you must be in control of the audience and the questions being asked, to the point where you decide which ones you will answer. If you don't then you'll lose credibility with the audience and they'll all think that you're a soft touch.

Dealing with difficult questions: as you increase the number of times you speak you'll increase the number of times that people ask questions. There are a number of different ways to deal with a difficult question. One way is to simply say to the questioner *I'd like to answer that question. However, there's insufficient time for me to give you a full answer, please see me in the coffee break at 10.30 and I'll give you more details then.* Or you might say *That's a great question and will take a long time to answer, so for the moment I'm going to leave that question and see if we have any time at the end of the question and answer session.* If you've decided that you don't wish to answer this difficult question then you're pretty well entitled to use a technique to avoid answering it. The other way to deal with difficult questions is to ask the questioner to provide the answer. This can be done with the following expression *That's a good question, and in fact a difficult question. Perhaps before I give my answer let me ask you what's your opinion.* Very often, though not always, difficult questions are asked not to elicit the answer from the presenter but simply to give the questioner the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge or depth of knowledge in the topic in hand. By throwing back the question to the questioner you actually please and give them that opportunity to demonstrate even more of their knowledge. If you believe that the audience members have answers to difficult questions asked, then involve them in the answering process. You can simply say to the audience, *Who has an opinion on that question?* You can hear with this that you are simply

asking for opinions and not for answers but despite using the word *opinions* you'll find that the audience members who have knowledge in this subject will certainly provide answers. So that's how to deal with difficult questions. Take them out of the speaking arena, explain there is not time to answer the question, throw it back to the questioner or involve the audience.

In the planning stage of your presentation, your speech or talk, it's essential that you give thought to the difficult questions that may be asked by members of your audience. This pre-planning will ensure that you know what you'll do when difficult questions are asked of you. By anticipating problems in advance you can be well prepared to deal with anything that comes up. In the event that you do not know the answer to a question and you simply don't have the knowledge then do not waffle or try and fudge the answer, the audience will immediately know if you're waffling and this may destroy any credibility you have built up during the rest of your presentation. Simply say to the audience or the questioner, *I do not know the answer to that question, what are your thoughts?* Again it may be that the questioner asked the question in order to be able to give their opinion, if this is the case then they'll welcome the opportunity to answer their own question. You could certainly involve the audience in answering questions to which you don't have the answer. Nobody expects the presenter to be perfect or have all the knowledge in the world. One of the main reasons that people are nervous about standing and speaking up is that they be asked questions to which they don't have an answer: they perceive this as being an embarrassing situation instead of an opportunity to learn.

Very often when a question is asked it gives you the opportunity to give your opinion. Give it; openly, clearly, confidently – this is what's expected of you. Remember when you make a statement followed by a question, if the question is answered then the statement isn't questioned. You may find occasions when members of the audience use this process without realising it. You must be extremely watchful and listen carefully to what's being said, so that you do not fall into this trap and answer a question, and by so doing indicate that you've accepted the statement that was made in front of the question. Let me give an example: A member of the audience stands at question time and says,

*"The new system will be expensive, how will it affect my department?"* If you answer the *how will it affect my department?* then you have in effect accepted the previous statement; the new system will be expensive. The whole of your presentation may have been on the fact that the new system will cost money but will not be expensive in terms of the benefits it will provide. If at the question stage you admit by default that the system will be expensive you may totally destroy your argument – by having not listened actively to the question being put and the statement that was made in front of it.

Now let me give you a technique which is known by professional presenters but not, in my experience, realised by many people. The next time you are at a meeting or a presentation or a seminar, watch the presenter's body language when they are asked questions; you may spot which questions are more difficult for the presenter as they will move back from the audience in an attempt to distance themselves from that difficult question. Now, naturally there is something to learn from this: when you're at the

question and answer stage, whether that's during the course of your speech or even at the end, make certain that you hold your ground in order to demonstrate your confidence as a presenter and your confidence in answering the question that has been posed. Use open hand gestures rather than palm down gestures when you're listening and when you're giving answers. Remember your body language is a major part of your presentation; the audience will read far more from your body language than the words you say or even how you say them.

Now let me give you some clear idea of asking questions of the audience and when you're a member of the audience how you can ask effective questions of the presenter. When you ask your audience questions make certain that those questions are clear and simple. If you ask convoluted and complex questions of the audience then you make it difficult for them to answer. The old expression *kiss*, should always be used, *keep it short and simple*. If you wish to involve the audience by asking them questions then the golden rule for questions is; make them easy to ask, make them easy to answer. When you wish to ask a question at a meeting or a seminar and in any situation there's a simple four-stage process to use:

- 1) State your name.
- 2) State your connection.
- 3) Make a statement.
- 4) Ask a question.

It's a very simple process to use so let me give you a couple of examples: Let's say you wish to ask a question at a Parent Teachers meeting at the local school which your children attend. One of the presenters on the platform has put forward the idea of an extension to the school library and you have a concern that it may involve you and the other parents in additional expense. Standing and saying, *Er, um one of the speakers said that we might have an extension, er, what's that going to cost?* is not the way to do it. You haven't told the audience at all who you are, why you are at the meeting and you haven't framed the question correctly. This is how to do it: "Good evening, my name is Peter Thomson, and I have children who attend the school. The second speaker this evening, John Hunter, stated that there was a proposal to extend the school library. Can you tell me whether if that proposal is passed it will involve parents in any additional expense?". You can hear what a difference this type of question would have on the panel - they know who you are, they know your connection, you clearly indicated that you were listening to the presentation being asked and delivered a well thought-out question. I'd certainly agree that it would be far more likely to get a thought-out answer to this thought-out question.

Let me give you another example: You'll probably notice that in press conferences held by politicians these days that members of the press used the same four stage technique, they state their name, the name of the paper they represent, they make a statement and then ask a question. Politicians are well aware of the statement question technique and will always question the statement and not answer the question until they've done so.

Here's an example:

"Prime Minister, John Hunter of the London Times. Your housing policy has been a disaster for the last five years, can you tell us what plans you have to address the nations concerns about housing?" Now you can hear how many techniques are being used in this question: the questioner, John Hunter, started off by clearly saying who he was asking the question of, in this case the Prime Minister, he then stated his own name and his connection with the London Times, then he made a statement regarding housing policy and his opinion that it has been a disaster for the last five years. Without giving the Prime Minister the opportunity to answer that statement he went on with his question *What plans do you have to address the nations concern about housing?* You can clearly hear that the journalist has tried to slide the idea of five years of disaster into the question and the nation's concern. Experienced politicians would totally ignore the question and make comment that their housing policy had not, repeat, not been a disaster for the last five years. If the journalist was lucky then the politician might indeed answer the actual question.

When you ask questions then use the four-stage process and ensure that you keep your questions simple to ask and simple to answer. Do not use the occasion to make a long statement and listen carefully during question time to the other questions which are asked, as you'll look extremely foolish if you ask a question that has already been answered. Question time is not an occasion to show off your knowledge on the topic in hand, it should only be used to gain further information or clarification.

So there we have it, questioning skills. Over the course of this section of the programme we've talked about the advantages and disadvantages of taking questions from your audience either during your speech or presentation or at the end of your speech or presentation. We've covered a number of distinct advantages and disadvantages to both methods and you'll need to give careful thought as to when you want the questions to be asked. We've looked at rhetorical questions and you now know not to leave a great gap after a rhetorical question in case the audience wishes to answer. Use *I'll tell you* immediately after your rhetorical question and then you can leave a gap and the audience will know that you will give the answer. We've covered dealing with questions from the audience, particularly difficult questions, and finally the four stage questioning process when you're a member of the audience. Questions are one of the most powerful methods of communication, questions enable you to give information, questions enable you to gain information; take the time to prepare the questions you ask, take the time to think about the questions you will be asked and take the time to prepare the answers. By so doing you'll become more effective and more efficient at the art of *standing and speaking up* on any occasion.

Now we're going to move on to one of the most fascinating areas in communication and presentation and that is the use of the language. Over the course of this section I'll give you some information about audience continuity, phonological ambiguity, imbedded commands, loops, building rapport, words to avoid, words to use and jargon. By the end of this section you'll know how to write a more powerful, a more persuasive, a more effective speech or talk than ever before – and by so doing enhance your reputation as a speaker, improve your communication style in all situations and become



more successful. All commercial and social interaction is based on communication and your ability and my ability to use language effectively is one of the key attributes we must have. So let's get started and talk about audience continuity.

It's essential when you're speaking to an audience that you decide in advance the *position* you wish the audience to be in when they hear your message. Often on audiotapes these days I hear a lack of continuity in the position of the audience ... Let me explain. During the whole of this programme I've been talking only to you. I've avoided the use of such expressions as *some of you* or *many of you* as I know there are not many of you or some of you, there is just *you*. Similarly when you're speaking to an audience there will be times when you'll look at one particular person and use singular language, there'll be other times when you move your eyes across the whole audience letting them know by that movement that you're speaking to all of them. You must be extremely careful with your use of language in this area. When you're speaking to the audience you are in effect speaking to each person individually. If for example, you're holding a team meeting then there'll be times when you're speaking to the whole team and you'll use appropriate team language.

There are a number of positions in which you can place the people in the audience. The first one is *Individual listener*. In this position you are speaking to the individual personally and, as I've said, you use your eye movements in order to indicate the position of each of those members of the audience. Let me give you an example: you're speaking to your team members and you want each of the members of the sales force team to decide on how many customers they will visit during the course of the next month. Naturally this will be an individual decision and as you ask the question *How many customers will you visit during the coming month?* you'll look at each person in turn. If you wish the team to give you a team answer then by casting your eyes across the whole of the audience and not focusing on one particular person, and using body language gestures with your hands to indicate that you mean all of them, and asking the same question *How many customers will you visit during the coming month?* the team will realise they need to talk together and come up with a total answer. So the first position is that of individual members of the audience listening individually.

Now, the second position is that they're listening as a group. You need to make it clear by your use of language and your body language as to the situation in which each person will find themselves.

Next, you can position each member of the audience as though they were a fly on the wall and you can do this in two different ways. First you can bring a member of the audience to the front to have a conversation with them, asking them questions and getting them involved in dialogue while the rest of the audience sits watching you having this conversation. In this position each of the other audience members, everyone except the person at the front of the room, is definitely in the position of *fly on the wall* or in other words, listening to you have a conversation with another person. The second and perhaps more powerful way of positioning all the audience members as though they were watching and listening to a conversation is to use the power of metaphor. This is where you report on a conversation you've had with another person and in effect

put what the other person said into inverted commas. Let me give you an example, the other day I was talking to John and he said to me that he felt he was capable of visiting more customers each month. I said, "That's great to hear John, how many more customers do you think you can visit each month?" John replied, "Well, I definitely could see at least one more customer per day, and I know that that would be worth a substantial increase of additional money in commission earnings." You can hear what's happened in this conversation, the audience is definitely being put in the position of listener and observer of the conversation that I was having with another person. This is a very powerful way of giving out information.

Another way to use the power of metaphor is to say *Somebody told me the other day that ...* and in this format you can say almost anything. When I do my sales training seminars I often have fun with this idea and explain to the sales people in this way: *I was talking with your sales manager the other day and he told me that John is the worst sales person he's ever met.* Naturally when I say this I look at John with a smile. The sales people clearly understand that if you wish to say something to another person or other people then one of the most powerful ways is to say it as though somebody else had said it. Doing it this way positions the audience in the third position namely, *fly on the wall*. So the audience can be in position 1, knowing that they're listening to you individually; they can be in position 2, where they're listening to you collectively or in position 3, where they're listening as though you're having a conversation with another person.

It's also possible to put the audience in the position of being *the author of what's being said* - in the direct mail business this is always used on the response order form. There the position of the reader of the direct mail letter changes when they start to fill in the order form. You've no doubt seen order forms where it starts with the words *Yes I'd like to order* and as you can hear the person filling in the order form has changed from being the listener to being the author of the piece. You're able to do this with the audience by simply changing your position and using the word *I* in the following way: you have a slide, computer generated graphic or overhead projector acetate with a statement on it and the statement would simply be, e.g. *I can call on one more customer each and every day!* You'd be able to introduce this slide by saying that these words were said to you. As each person in the audience reads the slide, in their own minds they'll hear the words *I can call on one more customer each and every day!* You understand that this programming can be highly manipulative and you must therefore be extremely careful in the use of metaphor, use it only with honesty and integrity. So, to summarise audience continuity and audience positioning, the audience can be the individual listener, the collective listener, the fly on the wall or the author of what's being said. You must give thought to the position in which you want the audience to receive your message; they'll receive it in a different way when they're sitting in a different position.

Now let's discuss *phonological ambiguity*, which as the words indicate is where you say one thing but there is ambiguity as to what you really meant. Here are some examples: *I know that you like me are experienced in listening to presenters.* The expression *like me* is ambiguous. Do I mean that you like me, or do I mean that you know the same things that I know and have the same experiences as I've had. I often hear this expression used

by presenters and I can tell from the way in which they use it that they don't realise they're using phonological ambiguity and programming the audience to like them. Be careful with its use. By all means use it but only use it when you meant to and not by default. I find that some phonological ambiguity expressions are just too manipulative, so I urge you to be extremely careful with their use. Here's another example, *By now you know it works*. In this expression do the words *by now* mean either by this point in time or purchase now (buy now). At my seminars I explain this concept in the following way,

"All successful people spend time listening to tapes, by tapes I mean audiocassette programmes." You can imagine that I say this with a smile on my face and then go on to explain the use of phonological ambiguity with the expression *by tapes*. When you've prepared the script for your speech then read it with your mind clearly focused to spot any phonological ambiguity that you may have put into your speech without even realising it. If you like me are as fascinated by this subject as I am, then let me recommend a book for you it's called *Persuasion Engineering* by Richard Bandler. You'll be fascinated by phonological ambiguity, syntactic ambiguity and the various other fascinating areas which Doctor Bandler puts forward.

Now let's look at *imbedded commands*. You imbed commands by the way in which you include certain programming words within the body of what you have to say to the audience, let me explain this to you in a sporting, context to start with. Imagine two golfers standing on the third tee of a golf course, the fairway stretches out in front of them but on the right hand side of the fairway is a large lake. One of the golfers standing on the tee is about to take his shot, when the other golfer says to him, "Don't, hit it in the water" as you can hear the command in the statement is *to hit it in the water*. Our minds do not easily deal with negatives, e.g. if you ask someone not to think of doing something then they have to think of doing it before they're able not to think of doing it. If you ask a young child to move away from the television screen by using a negatively phrased statement or question such as *Don't sit so close to the television* you'll see that they'll move towards the television before they start to move away, simply because their mind has to think of sitting closer to the television before they can cope with the negative content of the sentence which is *don't sit so close to the television*. Many of the commands and requests that we receive throughout our lives both social and commercial are put into the negative with a concentration on what the person does not want us to do rather than what they want us to do. So back to the example of the golfers. It's clear that the second golfer wants the first golfer to hit the ball into the water, hence, the use of the imbedded command of *don't* followed by a pause, *hit it in the water*, so what do you and I learn from this - simply that we can give people similar commands providing we start such commands with a negative followed by a pause.

Let me give you a clear example of this by using the power of three's and the power of metaphor. I don't know how much more successful you will be when you use the ideas you learn from this programme. I don't know how much more confident you will be when you use the ideas you learn from this programme, I don't even know how much more money you will make when you use the ideas you learn from this programme all I do know is what other people tell me when they say,

“Peter these ideas are so simple to use and yet they work every single time and now I feel much more confident in standing and speaking up.” You can hear quite clearly the imbedded commands of how more successful you’ll be, how much more confident you’ll be and how much more money you’ll make. You can also hear the power of metaphor of somebody stating that the ideas are simple; they work every time and make people feel confident. This is the power of imbedded commands and as with all communication skills they can be used to manipulate the person who listens them. This should not be your intent. As has often been said *All communication is an attempt to persuade someone else to do or avoid doing something either now or in the future* and isn’t that right, and isn’t it right that all communication is an attempt to persuade other people? It is the intent behind the persuasion which changes motivation into manipulation or manipulation into motivation.

Now let’s talk about what is often called *future pacing*. This is a method whereby you clearly explain to the audience what will happen in the future or in other words, you will clearly walk them through the future that you envision for them. Let me give you an example, I’ll use the expression I’ve used numerous times during the course of the programme which is *you can imagine*. I use this expression because it’s more of a command, *you can imagine* rather than the question *can you imagine?* *So you can imagine the next time that you stand to speak up for yourself how much more you confident you will feel knowing that you have properly prepared what you’re going to say and thought about the questions that you’ll be asked and thought about the answers that you will give to those questions. At the end of your next presentation you’ll hear the applause that the audience will give you, you’ll sit down feeling with yourself, pleased with the confidence you exhibited and pleased with the increase in your self-esteem.* You can clearly hear where I have future paced your experience. This is very powerful communication; if you’re able to explain to your audience the future they will experience by using the ideas that you explain to them or the actions you’re asking them to take once they leave your meeting, then they will go back to the future that you’ve created for them.

When I explain in my seminars how to sell the price of a commodity or service, I explain to the audience that they need to future pace the continuing problems a customer will experience by failing to purchase the discussed product or service and then to clearly denominate the financial impact of that decision. The customer will then perceive that the cost of the solution, namely the product or service, is minor in comparison to the potential loss. Let me put this into a clear example for you: let’s say that I am the sales person and you are the customer and together we are discussing your potential purchase of a new computer system which will cost twenty thousand pounds or dollars. I would ask you questions regarding the problems you’re having with your current system and what you believe in financial terms is the implication or downside of keeping the current system as opposed to changing to the new one. Let’s say that you explained to me that you’re losing sales in the area of two thousand pounds or dollars a month by the continued use and inadequacy of your current system. It loses records, it fails to generate invoices on time and you’ve had problems with data being corrupted. I’d suggest the following to you: so the current computer system is costing you two thousand pounds a month, that’s twenty four thousand per annum and if this situation continues for say the next five years then that’s going to cost you one hundred and

twenty thousand. Well the new system will only be an investment of twenty thousand and will save you over the time one hundred thousand pounds and naturally there are many other benefits to the new system as well. You can again clearly hear what is happening in this process, I'm getting you to understand what are the downside financial implications and how they'll appear over time, or in other words, I'm future pacing your mind and experience so that you'll be motivated to make a decision that is both good for you and good for me. Again I must emphasise that all communication can be highly manipulative and it is the intent of the user that changes manipulation into motivation, win, helping to win arrangements and smooth communication.

*Past pacing* is where you examine the upside and downside of somebody's past actions in order to create *away motivation* for them to take the action based on the ideas that you've been putting forward. Let me give an example of past pacing and I'll again use the idea of the computer system; it's the same scenario, I'm the sales person and you're the buyer and we're discussing your possible purchase of a new system, I've established from you that the old system has been costing you two thousand pounds or dollars per month. Before future pacing I would ask you the following question, *How long has the system been costing you two thousand a month?* You might answer *Ooh about two years.* Obviously I'll then calculate the amount of your loss by saying *So it cost you two thousand a month for the last two years so the system has already cost you forty eight thousand, is that right?* This is past pacing. As you can imagine when you realise that the old system has already cost you forty eight thousand and if you keep it for a further five years will cost you another one hundred and twenty thousand then the investment of only, or perhaps I could say *just* because that has phonological ambiguity, just twenty thousand is a small price to pay. In your preparation and writing of your speech, talk or presentation, give thought to the use of future and past pacing. It may well be that in certain situations you wish to motivate the audience or audience members to take action and clearly explaining the downside of their past actions and the potential consequences if they fail to change the way they do things can be very powerful communication.

Now let's look at *loops*. Loops are used by many seminar presenters and are often referred to as *collapsed loops*. This is simply where a story is started which makes a point but is not finished immediately so the audience members' minds are left hanging at the edge waiting for the conclusion and completion of the story. A second story is started and not completed, a third story is started and not completed and finally towards the end of the whole presentation each of the stories is finished. The reason that some presenters use this method or technique is that the rapid completion of a number of stories creates euphoria in the minds of the listeners as they endlessly say to themselves *Oh I see, Oh I get the point, Oh now that makes sense.* It does take a great deal of practise to be able to use collapsed loops. I've seen three professional presenters who are expert in this field, use a series of collapsed loops with each of the presenters telling an additional part of the story until at the end of the whole seminar all the stories ended with almost a collective sigh from the audience members.

Now let's talk about *building rapport* with the audience. The first thing you need to be careful with is the use of the following words: *you, I, we, us* and *them*. If you're holding a team meeting and constantly use the words *you* and *I*, then you're creating a distance

between yourself and the team members. You may wish to do this, however, if you're trying to build team spirit with all of the members including yourself as part of the team then the use of these two words *you* and *I* is not the way to do it. You will not create team togetherness. Far better to use *we* and *us* rather than *them, you* and *I*. You can imagine the difference in your team meeting if you as the team leader said, *You are simply not getting the results I expect* as opposed to *We are not getting the results we're capable of achieving*. The second sentence clearly indicates that you are part of the team and equally responsible for the lack of results and the solution. The first one with the words *you* and *I* clearly indicated that you felt the team members were at fault. You need to decide who you are and who they are and then position your language accordingly so that you either create the distance if that's what you want or build togetherness.

Often managers and leaders, particularly in business, use language that indicates they are superior and that their people are inferior. I'm certain they don't always mean to create this impression, it's just their simple lack of planning and lack of understanding of the use of language. This means that they deposition themselves and deposition their people and spoil the opportunity of the message being properly understood. People do not take information on board easily if the language used indicates that they are inferior to the speaker. The basis of rapport is that the listener perceives that you, as the talker, are the same as them. This can be done in a number of ways.

- 1) You may have a similar accent.
- 2) You may be similar in appearance. You can imagine giving a presentation to the board of directors of your company where you dressed in beach shorts and a T-shirt. It's unlikely that this dissimilar appearance will persuade the board members to take on board what you say and certainly won't give you the opportunity to build rapport by your appearance. Now this is not to say that you and I cannot be individuals, of course we can, however, if you wish to build rapport then it may be necessary to dress appropriately to the occasion in which you find yourself.

Every human being has what's been called a *home base of language*; this is based on the five main senses – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory. Let's concentrate on the first three, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. People who are visually based tend to use visual words such as *see, view, picture* and the like. They'll respond well to words like *show me* and tend to be quickly spoken. People who have an auditory base to their language use such words as *hear, sound, harmony, discord* and would be more at home with *tell me* than *show me*. They tend to speak very slowly. Kinaesthetic people on the other hand use action and feeling words such as, *smooth, get to grips, feel*. Once you're aware of this information you'll begin to hear people use their home base words more often than you've heard them in the past.

Perhaps the next time you hear these home base words is when they're used out of context with your home base, e.g. you may use the word *feel* whereas another person may use *see, I see what you mean* as opposed to *that feels right*. One of the simplest ways to build rapport with another person is to use their home base of language. Now it's important to remember that everybody uses all the words, it's just that they have a

home base that they tend to use more often than the other home base words. When you're speaking to a number of people you can be reasonably certain that some of them will be visual, some of them will be auditory and some of them will be kinaesthetic although in my experience I've found very few auditory people. It'll be necessary therefore for you to shift from your constant use of your home base words to ensure that you're using all the words from all the different home bases, so that you can build a greater level of rapport with all the audience members.

*Neurolinguistic programming* known as *NLP* is the study of language and the way in which the brain and mind deals with it. If you've not yet had the opportunity to study *NLP* then I would suggest it's worthwhile. Nightingale Conant have audio programmes on the subject and there are a number of excellent books available such *Frogs into Princes*, *Transformations* and *Persuasion Engineering*. Whilst you're listening to audience members, whether that's during question time or prior to your speech, then you may have the opportunity to understand more about how they use the language and by so doing have greater opportunities to build rapport. Let me give some examples; some people are more *away motivated* whereas some people are more *towards motivated* in their use of language. One person when talking about the reason why they purchased their car states *I was fed up with the old one always breaking down and being late for appointments* and as you can hear they're trying to move away from previous problems. Another person who is more towards motivated in their language would talk about the reasons why they bought their car as *I couldn't wait to be driving out feeling more successful, going to see more people, getting better results*. You can hear that that person is more towards motivated.

Some people are more into detail and some are more into generalities. If you're a more detailed person and insist on giving the audience a great amount of detail then you may break rapport. With any audience you'll certainly have detail and generality people and it's therefore necessary to use both styles, perhaps explaining the overview of what you're about to say and then slowly moving down into further detail. If you only remain in generalities because that's your natural style then those of the audience who are into detail will feel that there's not enough detail. If they're kinaesthetic they'll think you're only brushing the surface of the topic in hand. Some of your audience will be loudly spoken and some will be softly spoken and again you'll need to use a mixture of both of these styles in order to build the best rapport possible with the whole group. I discussed with you, at length, dealing with questions and this is the ideal opportunity to learn the use of language by audience members. If somebody stands to ask a question and uses visual language then when you respond use visual language back to them, this builds rapport.

*NLP* has an expression that says *the map is not the territory*; this expression sums up the different home bases of language and the way in which the world is perceived by different people. Let me explain. Let's say that a group of friends and I are in a hotel room attending a seminar, the seminar leader asks us to leave the seminar room and write a description, individually, of the room. You would certainly expect that each of those descriptions would be different. Some people would talk about the look of the room or talk about the colours of the furnishing and the walls; these would be the visual

people. Some of the audience would talk about the feel of the room, the comfort or otherwise of the chairs and how they felt the seminar proceeding, these are the kinaesthetic people. Other people would talk about the acoustics of the room and use words to do with sound, these would be the auditory people. In other words the territory, the seminar room, has remained the same but the map, the descriptions of the room, is different. The map is not the territory. Another expression, which clearly explains this idea is *the menu, is not the meal*. I'm certain that you've been to restaurants and the description of the meal on the menu did not match the meal on the plate, perhaps the meal was better than the description or perhaps as unfortunately can be the case, the meal did not live up to its expectations prompted by the over fanciful menu. Everyone has a different view or feeling of the world and as a presenter it's up to you to make certain that you touch base, if you see what I mean, with every audience member. That's my visual home base of language.

Now, let's look at a number of words that should be avoided: *literally, frankly* and *to be honest*. Usually these words mean the exact opposite of the intended meaning. Literally does not mean literally, it often means approximately. Frankly does not mean frankly, it means quite the reverse and to be honest can often indicate that the person using the expression is being far from honest. Avoid these expressions. Particularly when answering questions avoid the use of the word *but*. This three letter word usually indicates that you're about to disagree with what's been said, e.g. A questioner asks you, *surely you would agree that the old system has it's merits wouldn't you?* In answering you might say *That's a fair question but...* and you're almost able to hear that I'm about to disagree with the questioner. Far better to use *and* or *however* as the conjunction; *and* or *however* indicates that you have a different opinion and that you're prepared to accept that someone else holds a slightly different point of view.

As a speaker, regardless of how large or small the audience may be, it's your job to create word pictures in the audience's mind and therefore the use of adverbs and adjectives can help you in this process, without going over the top, let me repeat that, *without going over the top*. When you write your speech look at the adverbs and adjectives you use, and see if you can add a second one each time you use them. This will give your talk better rhythm and it can use the power of three's. Here are some examples: it was a dark day, it was a dark and dreary day; it was a positive ending, it was a powerful and positive ending, it was a powerful and positive and persuasive ending; he carefully reached his hand into the bag, he carefully and cautiously reached his hand into the bag. You have the idea. Once you've written your speech, go through it again and add additional adverbs and adjectives to bring the message to life.

Well, here we are at the end of this section, and over this part of the programme we've talked about audience continuity, imbedded commands, phonological ambiguity, collapsed loops, building rapport through the home base of language and words to avoid. The difference between the really great presenters and those who can just get by is in the use of language. Take the time to study what you say, take the time to study what others say and take the time to study the response to what you say, and your ability to present will increase.



And now we come to one of my favourite topics and that is body language. On this side of the cassette we'll cover first impressions, open gestures, posture and then thirty different gestures you should avoid because they'll rob your presentation of power and presence. When you're more aware of the body language that you use as a presenter you can ensure that each gesture is congruent or in harmony with the message you're putting over and ensure that the audience has the greatest opportunity to really understand what you're saying. The famous study conducted by Professor Albert Mehrabian indicated the following percentages of importance in communication. What we say - 7%, how we say it - 38% and body language 55%. If we are to believe Mehrabian, and certainly from experience over recent years I believe that we should, then it's imperative that your body language matches precisely with the words and is congruent with the message you are trying to put over. We never get a second chance to make a first impression and therefore when you stand up to speak or walk onto stage and speak; you must stand positively and confidently and walk to the stage in the same manner. Nothing will be more off-putting for the audience than to see the next speaker walk cautiously and nervously to the microphone. By now you understand how to overcome any nerves you may previously have felt at standing and speaking. You'll have practised your speech or your talk and know precisely what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. It's now time for your body language to clearly indicate that you're prepared and ready to speak.

As I mentioned before, you may well be on view prior to the time that you are to stand and speak. The body language that you exhibit whilst waiting to speak is equally important. If there is a programme of events then the members of the audience will know that you're the next to speak and will probably be looking at you and seeing how you're preparing yourself. If you're sweating and nervously mopping your brow or taking incessant sips of water then you're clearly giving away your nervous attitude. Remember you are on show from the moment you're in the room in which you will speak, and the first impression may not be the time you stand up to speak, it may be many minutes or even many hours before that moment. It's advisable when you're speaking to use open gestures and by this I mean open hands, palm up, rather than crossed arms. Your eyes need to be clearly open when you are part of the audience and interested in both the audience and the message you are putting over. I'll talk more about hand movements and what to avoid a little later. The big challenge with body language for presenters is to make absolutely certain that the message is congruent with the body language, there's little point in saying you're confident and demonstrating nervous body language. Make absolutely certain that what you say matches with how you say it and every single movement you make. The posture you exhibit before speaking and when speaking tells the audience a great deal about you. When waiting to speak, sit upright, show interest in what's happening, and be interested in the other speakers or questions being asked. There's a great deal to learn from this part of any event.

When you stand to speak, particularly if this is at the front of the room or on stage then stand with your feet firmly positioned approximately 18" apart with a slight flex in your knees. You don't want to be planted like a tree, incapable of moving but you do want to demonstrate a firm position. Stand upright with your shoulders back, chest out and

your body in such a position that you can breath deeply, easily and naturally. If, as I often do, you sit on a stool at the front of the room or the stage, or sit at the front of your desk at team meetings then avoid leaning too far forward from the waist as this will restrict your breathing and affect the way you use your voice. You know from your own experience when you've seen a presenter who is obviously confident and demonstrates that confidence even before they've said a single word. That is precisely the posture you wish to use. When we come to the practice session of the programme later, we'll talk more about how you can play with those postures in order to see the difference and hear the difference as to what you'll say.

Now let's look at thirty different things you should avoid doing:

- 1) The jingler – The jingler is the person who has loose change in their pockets and insists on playing with that loose change. This action will be seen by the audience and will also be heard by those who are close enough to hear this distracting noise. Before you stand to speak check that you do not have any loose change in a pocket so that you won't be tempted to play with it. If you have a member of the audience who is acting as the jingler then in an appropriate break, perhaps the coffee break, you might be able to ask them to change a note for you and get the loose change away from them.
- 2) The fig leaf – The fig leaf position is where you stand on stage feet firmly pressed together, leaning slightly forward from the waist with your hands clasped in front of you rather like Adam or a fig leaf. This posture doesn't do much for your confidence either internally or by the audience's perception. Stand up straight, use the correct posture for breathing and speak with your shoulders back and in an upright stance.
- 3) The zip – This is the person who is constantly checking that the zip is closed, usually seen in men who are uncertain that they've previously zipped up their trousers. Now, seriously, the solution is to check that the zip is done up and then leave it alone. Any of these habits that the audience can spot will detract from your message and distract the audiences' minds.
- 4) The sniffer – The sniffer is the person who has a cold or is suffering from hayfever and sniffs constantly throughout the presentation. Some years ago I was the key note speaker at a conference with a large audience, the chairman of the meeting was a sniffer and sniffed constantly throughout his presentation and in conversation with some of his colleagues they had mentioned to me that this was his habit even though he didn't have a cold. If you have a cold or you suffer from hayfever then either blow your nose before speaking or take the appropriate medicine. Nothing is worse, particularly over a loud speaker system than to hear someone constantly sniffing.
- 5) The hairdresser – The hairdresser is the person who regularly plays with their hair, either patting it back into place or pushing a stray lock away from their forehead. Any hand to head gesture should be avoided and as you'll see on the video part of the programme. Hair patting is distracting, so make certain that you look at yourself in the mirror prior to any speaking event and if necessary use any appropriate hairspray to keep your hair in place ... of course any combing or brushing of hair in public must be avoided.
- 6) The tie strangler – Invariably this is a man who is concerned that his tie is not straight and he spends most of his presentation fiddling with the knot of his tie. The

audience will begin to count the number of times a presenter fiddles with his tie, with coins or with anything else. Whilst we're on the point of the tie let me make another couple of points. The length of the tie is very important, as I've said before it should reach the belt buckle. If a great expanse of shirt is visible between the end of the tie and the belt, this will put off the audience and says to them that the presenter has not taken care with their appearance, and by implication, may not have taken enough care with the research or presentation of the subject material. If you wear a tie then make certain that the colour matches with what you wear and that the tie is in the right place - a tie that's pushed slightly under the collar is slightly off putting. I always think it's a good idea for a man to wear a dark suit with a pale coloured or white shirt and an appropriate business tie. For women, a similar business look for business presentations.

- 7) The fishwife - The fishwife position is when the presenter stands either at the side or behind the lectern and leans one elbow on the lectern and chats over the garden wall to the audience. Whilst this may look very casual and very confident it doesn't give out a professional air. Avoid wherever possible leaning on the lectern, particularly avoid holding the lectern so tightly that your knuckles become white and clearly indicate to the audience that you're nervous or have something to hide.
- 8) The itch - How many times have you seen a speaker with an itch? Isn't it off putting? If you have an itch then scratch it before you stand to speak or simply cope with the problem. Any movement or body gesture that you use which will be distracting to the audience must be avoided at all costs. It can be difficult enough to maintain everybody's attention without giving them a distraction to focus on which will detract from the message.
- 9) The dieter - This person has clothes, which simply do not fit. The clothes are too big and rather than have the appropriate belt to hold up trousers, this person constantly decides to pull their trousers back up to their waistline. Of course when they do this, the shirt doesn't stay in the trousers and has to be tucked in again. Remember my comment about judging the book by the cover. If the speech, presentation or talk is important to you and your future then maybe it's necessary to buy clothes which are appropriate and which fit you perfectly.
- 10) The brusher - This is the person who is constantly smoothing their clothes or perhaps brushing imaginary bits of stuff from their suit. Isn't it amazing that we do not always notice these habit gestures in ourselves but quickly and easily spot them when they're used by other people? When we discuss this idea in the practice section, you'll need to undertake watching yourself in the mirror, a full-length mirror in order to spot these off putting body gestures that you may use.
- 11) Hands in pockets - One hand in a trouser pocket can indicate a casual and relaxed pose, however you need to take care with this, as if it appears too casual then it may be out of sync with your message. The problem with putting your hand in your pocket is that you may be tempted to fiddle with your handkerchief or change or your wallet or purse and that will be spotted by the audience members. Certainly putting both hands in pockets is not a good idea; this looks far too casual for any type of presentation and may indicate that the presenter is nervous or trying to hide something. Hands are far better out of the pockets adding to the message with smooth palm up gestures. Many people say that they would be unable to speak if

they couldn't use their hands, and yet the moment they stand to speak their hands are immediately hidden in the pockets, this is a clear sign of nervousness.

- 12) Dominant thumbs - Dominant thumbs is where the hand is holding the lapel of the suit jacket with the thumb pointing upwards toward the side of the face and is usually tapping the chest. This gesture is to be avoided. It certainly is dominant, and can be considered as superior positioning. If both hands are holding both lapels and both thumbs are showing tapping then you can imagine the feeling that this would generate in the audience members. You might try this gesture for yourself provided it is safe to do so. Another position where dominant thumbs come into play is where most of the hand is in the trouser pocket and the thumb is sticking out and pointing down. In some training I've heard that people have been told to use this gesture, I totally disagree; there are far better ways of indicating confidence without using that dominant thumb.
- 13) Crossed arms - Any body language gesture which attempts to cover the body or protect it can be seen as negative or defensive. This is the last feeling that you want and definitely the last feeling you want to engender in the audience's mind. Body language gestures should be open, not closed and it's difficult to speak with the arms folded across the chest. Dominant thumbs again can come into play with folded arms, the arms folded but the thumbs are left exposed, avoid this gesture. If you're wearing a radio microphone, a tie clip microphone then folding the arms may make the lapels rub against the microphone and make noises through the loud speaker system. Keep your arms unfolded and use open gestures.
- 14) Lip licking - Excessive lip licking is a clear sign of nervousness and therefore should be avoided. Constantly licking your lips will make the lips sore and make it more difficult to speak. Lip licking is also a sign that someone may be being economical with truth, perhaps even lying; this is not what you're trying to convey.
- 15) Hand over mouth - The hand over the mouth of the presenter or talker must be avoided at all times. First if you're using a microphone then you will block the sound to the microphone and the audience will not be able to hear what you're saying. Second, this body language is often read to mean that the person using it whilst talking is either extremely nervous about what they're saying, or has had the task of talking delegated to them and they don't like the message, or that they're telling a downright lie. Picture the chairman of a company standing in front of all his staff, announcing a merger with a larger concern. As the chairman tells his long serving staff that there will be no redundancies he puts his hand across his mouth. Everyone in the room will know he's lying, at worst or at best, they'll have a major concern that there may be redundancies. Keep your hand away from your mouth and face.
- 16) Ear pulling - By ear pulling I mean pulling the lobe of the ear and this is another sign that indicates nervousness or lying and therefore should be avoided. Putting the finger inside the ear is certainly not polite and if done whilst listening to a question indicates that you don't like what you're hearing.
- 17) Eye pulling - Pulling the corner of the eye is a similar gesture that means lying or nervousness. I'm given to understand that in the early days of black and white films, the silent films that is, that actors were told to pull the corner of the eye while they were telling a lie.
- 18) Touching the nose - The same idea.

- 19) Pulling the collar - This gesture that seems to anyone that the presenter is trying to let steam escape is the same, it indicates nervousness or lying.
- 20) Pens in the pocket - Pens in the outside pocket of a suit jacket or in the pocket of a shirt if the jacket is not on, should definitely be avoided. It spoils the line of the jacket and shirt and gives the wrong impression. You have seen, as I have seen, people with pens in their outside pockets and you know very well the impression it gives, it should be avoided at all times.
- 21) Hands behind the head - Whilst this is difficult to do while standing up it also looks unnatural. It's easier to do while sitting down and indicates a superior posture.
- 22) Steeple hands - Steeple hands or upward pointing hands indicate a superior or dominant posture and can be used to good effect if you're sitting at a table and wish to take control of a meeting. Lowering your voice and using the steeple hand gesture will clearly tell everybody that you are in control. Unless you mean to use this gesture I would suggest that you avoid it unless, as with all body language gestures, it matches and is congruent with what you say.
- 23) Pointing - The only pointing that should take place in a presentation or speech is to graphics or props. Do not point at the audience and do not wag your first finger at them. An old expression I heard some years ago was *If you point at somebody then there are three fingers pointing back at you and your thumb is praying*. The wagging finger may indicate that you wish to hit the audience over the head with something. Pointing, as were told as children, is rude and in presentations should be avoided.
- 24) Dominant palms - The dominant palm is when the hand is palm down particularly with the finger pointing and this dominant palm is a very dominant gesture. Imagine that as a presenter you ask a member of your audience to move to a certain part of the room to collect a certain object. Using this palm down gesture with the pointing finger is extremely dictatorial and unless you mean to do it will prompt the wrong feelings in that audience member, the palm up gesture is far better. Palm up gestures generally indicate that you have nothing to hide and when asking someone to do something will certainly have a far better effect.
- 25) Tapping pens - If you play with your pen or pens, tapping them on the table or lectern or clicking them so the point goes in and out you'll have each audience member watching the pen and not listening to what you say. Now I know that many of these ideas are obvious to you and yet as a professional presenter I'm constantly aware of people using these distracting body language gestures. If you have a good friend who is prepared to give you honest feedback then maybe many of these audience-annoying habits can be eradicated.
- 26) Silly smiles and coy looks - You know exactly what I mean by these looks, you've seen people presenting, perhaps because of their nervousness using silly smiles and coy looks. Nothing could be worse and nothing could be more distracting from a presentation or talk.
- 27) Closed eyes - You've probably met during your life a number of people whose blink rate is extremely slow and at times when they're talking their eyes are closed? Well perhaps this is OK for them but it's not OK during your presentation. This body language gesture of closed eyes indicates that you'd probably like to be somewhere else, so make certain that your eyes are open and that your upper eyelids are in the position between the top of the pupil and the top of the iris. This is the high interest look.

- 28) Wiping palms – If because the room is hot or because you have a slight nervousness about you, your palms begin to sweat then put your hands in your pocket briefly, wipe your palms on your handkerchief that you left there for the purpose and take them out again.
- 29) Washing hands – This is a body language gesture which changes in meaning subject to the speed at which you wash your hands, if this is done slowly then it can indicate that you have your own benefit in mind and not the benefit of the audience. If it's done quickly, rubbing the hands together quickly then this can indicate that you are enthusiastic.
- 30) Chopping, slicing, thumping and bashing – These are all movements, which you can make with your hands. The chopping movement may indicate that you wish to chop things into pieces, similarly with slicing. Thumping your fist on the table or lectern is a clear sign of anger and frustration as is bashing one hand into the other. All of these emphasis gestures can be used to great effect but as I've stated many times you must be totally aware that you are using them.

So here we are at the end of the section on body language for you, the presenter, and for this section of the programme we've looked at the fact that first impressions are very important and that you need to stand and speak with confident body language gestures. We've looked at open gestures, posture and thirty different body language gestures that you should avoid. Let me remind you of the percentages quoted by Professor Albert Mehrabian: *7% what you say; 38% how you say what you say; 55% body language*. No wonder it is so important to ensure that you demonstrate gestures and movements which will add power to your message, add power to your words and add power to any presentation you make. From this moment forward be more aware of the body language you use, catch yourself doing it right and catch yourself if you fold your arms as you answer a question. Once you're comfortable with knowing that you can use the appropriate body language on any occasion then you'll be better prepared to stand and speak up on any occasion.

Because communication is a two way street, it's obviously important for any presenter or talker to be able to read exactly what the audience means by their various changes of body language. Whenever you're having a conversation with another person or with a group of people then their body language gestures will clearly tell you the impact and results your message is having. If you don't take notice of the various body language movements and react accordingly then you may miss many opportunities to change your style or delivery in order that you do get the results you want. Over the course of this section of the programme I'll share with you some amazing information about how you can read exactly what everybody is thinking by the way in which they move their bodies and their eyes. Once you become more aware of people's body language movements and their eye movements, and have mastered the art of reading those signals then you'll be a far better communicator and enjoy more than ever before every interaction with another person or group of people. Here are the areas we'll discuss over this section of the programme. We'll start by looking at eye movements and what we can learn by the movement of the upper and lower eyelids; then we'll go through evaluation gestures; leg movements and arm movements; then twenty six gestures and movements you can look out ; the solutions for negative gestures; and then the eye

movements you can use when you're dealing with a small group and one person as the decision maker.

So let's get started straight away and *look at*, you can hear my visual language, look at the movement of the upper and lower eyelids. The upper eyelids and their position in relation to the iris and pupil of the eye are a clear indication of somebody's level of interest in what they're seeing, hearing and feeling. This is how you read the level of interest in your audience members' eyes; when the upper eyelid is raised to such an extent that you can see the white of the eye above the iris, the coloured part of the eye, then you can read this look as shock, surprise or panic. Often those who talk about how to spot when another person is telling a lie explain that this wide open eyes look is a classic give-away of some one who is panicked through the thought process of lying,. If you see this look in your audience's eyes then let's hope that what you've said you've said on purpose. When you see this look it obviously mustn't be ignored, spotting body language gestures or eye movements is not simply an exercise in active watching. The reason for spotting these various gestures and movements is so that you and I can take different actions or say different words so that the audience will understand precisely what we're trying to convey.

When the level of the upper eyelid is between the top of the iris and the top of the pupil, then the person exhibiting this eyelid level is showing their high interest in what is happening around them, and this is obviously the level that we want to see in every audience member on every occasion. As you're looking at the various members of the audience be particularly aware of this look. In every conversation you have, and as you and I know, every conversation is a persuasion process, you would wish to see this look from everyone listening to you. When the upper eyelid level is across the centre of the pupil then this indicates that the person is losing interest in what is happening around them, this is not the look that you would like to see in any audience members' eyes. The fourth position you can spot very easily and that is when the upper eyelids have fallen so far that the person's eyes are closed.

Now what to do about it; when you see that you are keeping the audiences members' attention then maintain and remember the words used, the body language used, the style you used and of course the delivery you used. Anchor this high interest level in both yourself and the audience members. When you see the audience losing interest by the movement of the upper eyelid to a position across the pupil then you need to change what you're doing or what you're saying or the way in which you're saying it. Here are a number of ways in which you can change what you're doing:

- 1) Move to a position that you've previously anchored as a positive position on stage or wherever you're presenting, and this will have the effect of firing the anchor for the audience members and should have their eyelids move back to the high interest position.
- 2) If the lower eyelid position is common amongst all the audience members then a major change is needed, perhaps even a coffee break.
- 3) Introduce a new topic, perhaps using the words *Let's now take a different tack and look precisely how you'll benefit from the information we've just been through.*

- 4) Introduce a networking break so that everyone has to stand up and talk.
- 5) Perhaps this lower interest level has been created, not by what you've said or how you've said it but by the temperature of the room. If you feel that the room is particularly warm then perhaps your audience members are also feeling this and it's created a sleepy feeling for them all. A word of warning here ... because you're at the front of the room and standing and speaking, then probably because of the adrenaline burn, you are somewhat warmer than the rest of the people in the room, so do not misread the lowering eyelid movement as sleepiness created by warmth, just because you're somewhat hot.
- 6) Have an interactive exercise in your bag of presenter's tools in your mind. You need to have a number of these types of exercises, which you can launch into in order to, change the atmosphere in the room or the level of each audience member's eyelids. Perhaps you might use the shapes exercise, the geometric testing which I explained to you earlier in the programme.
- 7) Ask questions. Let's say that you're holding a team meeting and just one of your team members is showing this lower interest level eyelid movement. Naturally if all the rest of the team are showing high interest level eyelid movements then it's not you, your content, your style or your delivery which is making the one team member lose interest. Perhaps they had a late night and are simply feeling tired, you obviously want them involved in the meeting and therefore you only want to re-energise this one person - asking this person a good open-ended question should quickly see their eyes re-open, as the upper eyelids move either to high interest level or perhaps even shock and panic.
- 8) Prompt a body language change - This can be done by asking questions of the whole audience where they need to put up their hands to indicate their response, and you prompt this hand movement by raising your own hand. It's very difficult to raise your hand and keep eyelids at a low interest level.

All of these eight ideas can be used not only to change a low interest level into a high interest level, they can also be used to maintain the high interest level. Now, let's look at the inner canthus of the eye, the inner canthus or in the plural the inner canthii of the eyes is the small red triangle in the corner of the eye nearest the nose. The covering or the uncovering of this small red triangle is one of the clearest ways of understanding the reaction to your words in the faces of your audience members. When the inner canthus is covered by the movement of the lower eyelid towards the nose and upwards, then this look indicates that the person is showing concern. This movement may be extremely slight and yet even the slightest covering of the inner canthus by the lower eyelid clearly indicates that you've triggered a worry or concern in the person showing this movement. If you see the inner canthus being initially covered and then by the relaxation of the lower eyelid the inner canthus is visible again, you know that that person has moved from a concerned state of mind to a more relaxed frame of mind. In one to one conversations, the knowledge of this movement of the lower eyelid and the covering and uncovering of the inner canthus can be critical to the success of that conversation. You can imagine that now you know about this movement how easy it will be to read the exact reaction your message is having. In a large meeting it's perhaps more difficult to spot this inner canthus covering and uncovering, but when you add your knowledge and the observation of the movement of the upper and lower eyelids



you can understand how much more powerful and effective and persuasive you can be in any presentation, speech or talk.

Now let's examine evaluation gestures, as you're talking you obviously wish to understand immediately how your audience members are evaluating your message. The body language evaluation gestures include some of the following:

- 1) Stroking the chin – When someone strokes their chin, they're probably going through a thinking or evaluation process in their mind and at this stage you may not know whether that evaluation is positive or negative. Imagine this, you see an audience member, perhaps a director at a board meeting stroking his chin as you explain the benefits of your idea. As the stroking process continues the director leans back in his chair, stops stroking his chin, folds his arms, the inner canthus disappears and he crosses his legs. It's pretty obvious the evaluation is negative, but on the other hand, if after he's finished stroking his chin, he leans forward, his eyes open so his upper eyelid is of the high interest position and a slight smile appears on his face, his evaluation is positive.
- 2) A finger along the face – When someone puts their first finger on the side of their face, then this can also be considered as an evaluation gesture. Some researchers have stated that when the second finger is placed between the lips and the chin, together with the first finger at the side of the face, this is negative evaluation. Your experience at reading this gesture will tell you if you agree with their diagnosis.
- 3) Some of the other gestures used when people evaluate information include polishing their spectacles, lighting a pipe or cigarette, refilling a pen or any other time-using activity. There's an old expression in sales training which says *As a sales person you have to take in the candle but you have to let the customer light it* or in other words people do need time to evaluate the information they receive. Make certain that you allow thinking time or evaluation time for your audience. You can do this by simply pausing to look again at your notes.

Now let's look at crossed legs and crossed arms; everyone with knowledge of body language would confirm that crossed legs and crossed arms are defensive or negative gestures. Sometimes people say that they cross their arms or cross their legs to feel more comfortable and yes, that's exactly why they do it. They do it to feel more comfortable; they are more comfortable defending their body with these crossed arms or leg gestures. Certainly when you're standing and speaking, you'll want to observe that change in the crossing and uncrossing of legs and arms. You can think of it in this way; when the arms are uncrossed then the person is open when the arms are crossed or folded then that person is more closed to your argument. Similarly with legs, crossed legs negative or defensive, open legs open attitude. The difference with the crossed legs movements is when someone crosses their legs towards the person who is sitting alongside them, on this occasion this would probably mean they were comfortable with that person. If you see these negative or defensive gestures and you're certain that they mean negativity or defensiveness then you can use the same eight ideas that I shared with you earlier in order to break that thought process and make the audience members more open to what you have to say.

Now moving on to twenty-six body language gestures, which the audience will demonstrate to you and what you can learn from those gestures; in particular, what the audience may be thinking.

- 1) Hidden hands – When the hands are hidden, this can indicate that the person is trying to hide something. Of course it can also mean that their hands are cold, but with all body language gestures there can be a number of reasons why they're being demonstrated. You and I are examining the communication aspect of body language; very often the person hiding their hands in a sitting position will be attempting to disguise their feelings.
- 2) Hands behind the head – This position with the hands clasped together behind the head is often accompanied by the person leaning back and sliding down slightly in the chair. Sometimes you'll see the person rocking the chair at the same time; this is a dominant and superior posture, the extremely open body language position is saying, *you can't hurt me*. They may even be indicating *I've heard it all before*. This is a position which all presenters hate to see as you can understand. If you see a member demonstrating this position there is an easy way to get them to change their attitude and their posture, simply pass something to them, perhaps a piece of paper or ask their opinion on what you've just said. The last thing you want to happen is for this person to remain in this body language position, because if they do so they will continue to hold that positioning in their mind and be less likely to understand, agree with or assimilate what you've been saying.
- 3) Hand to mouth – As I discussed with you in the presenter's body language section, this hand to mouth gesture can have a number of different meanings. If it's a member of the audience putting their hand to their mouth while you're speaking this can indicate that they either want to ask a question or disagree with what you're saying or they may even think that you're lying. When you see this gesture don't pounce on the person, simply involve them in dialogue, ask them a question, get them involved. If you're tempted to ask them *do you have a question?* you'll find that their instantaneous response is *No!* Do not be misled by this *no*, if you wait for just a few seconds, you'll find that they'll ask a question, a question that's been uppermost in their mind. This hand to mouth gesture may be done with a pencil or a pen instead of only the hand. Be very aware of the position of the audience member's hands in relation to their faces. You can think of it in this way, the audience is likely to demonstrate body language gestures that they feel you should demonstrate whilst you're saying what you're saying. This hand to mouth gesture and its various meanings are certainly one of the key body language gestures of which you need to be aware as a presenter.
- 4) Picking bits – When you see someone picking imaginary bits from their clothing this is a clear indication that they may be bored with what you're saying. You'll use one of the eight ideas we covered earlier in order to break this gesture and mindset.
- 5) Steepled hands – I've already given you information regarding this body language gesture and of course, when you see a member of the audience demonstrating it then you'll know that they've moved into a superior mind set and position. You'll break this position, or perhaps I should say change their mind, in the same way that you would with the hands clasped behind the neck. In other words involve them in the conversation or pass them something so they have to move their hands.

- 6) Leaning back - When a person leans away from you then they're trying to distance themselves from you and possibly trying to distance themselves from your message.
- 7) Leaning forward - When a person leans towards you then they're moving in your direction, this is the movement you wish to see. Watch two people having a conversation, whether they're sitting down or standing up, and see the interplay or body language as they move towards or away from each other as the conversation proceeds.
- 8) Talking to others - Now, whilst this isn't a body language gesture if you see a member of your audience starting to talk to another member of the audience then you can be fairly certain that you've said something so interesting that they need to discuss it or they're bored with what you're saying and wish to have a more interesting conversation. Again, involvement will be the solution.
- 9) Looking away - This signal, which we would normally assume would be negative, may not be so. I've noticed that auditory home based people do not need to look in order to hear, whereas visually based people need to look and hear. So that member of your team whose always casting their eyes around the room whilst you're putting over your fascinating information may in fact be taking in every word that you say, they may just be an auditory home based person.
- 10) Yawning - Yes it does happen, people do yawn, however, it may not be you. The room may be warm, they may have had a late night or maybe they're bored. Involve them, ask them questions, if everybody's yawning take a break.
- 11) Hand supporting the chin - This can often happen when someone is bored, the head is trying to fall towards the chest and they need to use their hand to support their chin. The usual solutions.
- 12) Reading the notes - As we've discussed before it can sometimes be a mistake to hand out notes for people to read, prior to you speaking. This is because they wish to read those notes to find out where your speech will go. When you see someone reading the notes, it may well be that they're quick minded and have already moved on from the point you're making. It may of course simply be that you've not made yourself abundantly clear and they need to read the notes in order to fully understand what you've said. If you've perceived that this action is created because they're bored with the proceedings, then you know the solutions.
- 13) Writing notes - If your speech, or presentation or talk means that the audience members need to take notes then you need to allow time for them to do just that. If on the first occasion they need to take notes, you notice who is the slowest writer then you can use that person on future occasions as the gauge as to when you should continue to speak.
- 14) Nodding - In every audience there's someone, who will nod when you make your points. Be careful, these noddors are sometimes the people who agree with everything and then don't take action. You can certainly use the nodder to reinforce, by them nodding, the various points you're making. In other words, as you make a point and nod that person will nod with you and all the other members of the audience will understand that this is a point to be accepted.
- 15) Turning away - If someone in the audience is constantly turning away from you this can indicate they're trying to distance themselves from your information. Involve them or change the way you're saying what you say.

- 16) Sitting upright – If someone who’s been slouching in their chair suddenly sits upright then there’s a reasonable chance that you’ve excited them. Look out for people changing their posture and certainly the one you would wish to see is when people change from being bored to being excited. So often, much of body language discussion is centred on spotting the negative aspects, but it’s also important to realise when what you say, and how you say what you’re saying, is making a positive difference to your audience members. By making careful note of what you’re doing or what you’re saying or what you’re demonstrating which causes this change, you will know how to create the change in the future. Seeing when the eyes open wide, seeing when people sit upright, seeing when people lean towards you and all the other positive signs and making a note of these things for future use will improve your future speaking activities.
- 17) Slouched – When someone slouches in their chair, they’re indicating that they’re losing interest in your presentation.
- 18) The ankle cross – You can imagine this. You’ve attended at your dentist’s surgery in order to have a filling done. You sit in the chair, the dentist’s chair; the dentist presses the appropriate switch and the chair starts to lean backwards, what is the first thing you do? Yes, the first thing you do is cross your ankles. This ankle cross indicates that the person using this gesture is feeling a degree of pressure. Note for yourself the occasions when you use this gesture and see if you are feeling pressured in any way when you do it. If you see a member of your audience using this gesture it may well be that you’re putting them under undue pressure, take the appropriate actions.
- 19) Dominant thumbs – I’ve already given you a great deal of information about dominant thumbs and the fact that you should avoid using them when you’re presenting a talk. If you see a listener using this gesture then the various actions I’ve already outlined to get them to move their hands will work to get them to move.
- 20) Nervous when speaking – There may occasions when you’re talking or giving presentations that you wish someone else from the audience to stand and speak. They may be scared stiff at the prospect and wish that the ground would open up and swallow them. Help them to overcome these nerves, engage them in one to one conversations where you’re looking at the audience and they, the person speaking to you, is only looking at you. As the conversation proceeds start moving so that you are still facing each other but now the audience can see both of you, as you continue to speak, keep moving until you have your back to the audience and the other person is facing the audience. Slowly, but surely back away from the person, still talking to them until you are part of the audience and they’re standing there with total confidence. This is perhaps one of the easiest ways to get someone to overcome their fear of speaking in public. I’ve used it on many occasions and on every occasion it’s proved successful and the person has been delighted with themselves. This confidence of being able to stand and speak in public rubs off into every other area of life.
- 21) Pen fiddling – When someone fiddles with a pen then their mind has wandered away from the subject. Involve them.
- 22) Shifting position – If you see someone constantly shifting their position particularly if they’re sat in a chair, then it may be time for a comfort break.

- 23) Perspiring - If the room is too hot then people will perspire. The way to deal with this is to adjust the air conditioning or open more windows. If your audience members are either too hot or too cold they'll not be listening actively to what you have to say.
- 24) Shivering - The same applies.
- 25) Foot tapping - I'm certain that you've had conversations with people, as I have, who spend the whole time tapping one foot. This is usually the highly-strung person who has lots of nervous energy and they're simply demonstrating that by foot tapping. It may be a sign that they wish you to move on, that the person has become bored.
- 26) Moving to the edge of the seat - When you see someone move to the edge of the seat and make small *I'm about to stand up* movements, then this is precisely what they wish to do. They may wish to use the restroom or are so fed up with the meeting that they want to go home. You'll need to take the appropriate action which may be to involve them or take a break.

As we've talked about eye movements before I'd now like to share with you some ideas on how to use your eyes, particularly in a presentation to a client. Invariably there'll be one person from the clients side who will be the decision maker. As you're talking to the group, start by looking at the decision maker and then move your eyes to look at all the other people in the group finishing a main sentence or main question by again looking at the decision maker. In this way you acknowledge the decision maker's power without upsetting the other people in the group.

During a normal presentation or speech if you wish to let an audience member know that you're about to ask them a question, then simply look at them for longer than normal. If, as the chair of a meeting, it's your function to ask the other members of that meeting questions then you can clearly indicate with your eye movements when you wish someone to stop talking and who will be the next person to answer your question. If you feel that one person is talking too long, giving too much of an answer then simply stop looking at them. In order to indicate to a person that they will be next to be asked a question, while the previous person is answering, move your eyes and look at the next person you'll ask. By opening your eyes slightly wider than normal when you do this then they will realise that they're next. At all times when you're presenting, regardless of the size of the audience, whether it's a one to one meeting, a small group meeting or even to hundreds or thousands of people you must be constantly aware and alert to body language changes. This is the feedback, the unspoken truth that the audience is giving you, ignore it at your peril. So, there we have it, how to read the audience's body language, and as I'm sure you'll agree this is a truly fascinating subject within the area of communication skills and thankfully, they can be practised every single day.

The body language gestures I've covered in this section show in day to day conversations and also in as the responses to a presentation or speech. Become more aware each and every day as to the unspoken truth those around you will tell you, practise by watching other people having conversations. In this way, from your position as fly on the wall you have an ideal opportunity to learn. Over this section, we've covered: watching eyes, the upper and lower eyelids, the inner canthus; crossed

legs and crossed arms; together with a further twenty six body language gestures which you can spot and deal with; also eight ideas for effectively dealing with negative body language. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn – remember, body language is up to 55% of communication. If you take the time to watch the audience, if you take the time to watch the body languages they exhibit and if you take the time to respond appropriately then every speech, every talk and every presentation you give will be more effective.

Of all the parts of a presentation which have the greatest possibility of going wrong and creating problems for you, then perhaps the use of visual aids in the main culprit. So often audiences are subjected to badly structured and presented graphic, acetates and slides because of their visual nature. Visual aids are more memorable than the spoken word and any errors made in this area of your presentation will be remembered for far longer than any slips in what you say. Over the course of this section, I'd like to discuss with you some basic rules, thoughts and ideas regarding the effective use of visual aids. I'll cover visual aids generally, flipchart presentations, overhead projector presentations and computer presentations. I'll look specifically at the advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods of presenting visual information to your audience. By the time you've listened to this section of the programme you'll know how to prepare your visual aids, you'll know how to avoid the common mistakes that are made and you'll know that any presentation you'll give involving visual aids will be more effective in getting your message over, more understood by those who hear you and more memorable than ever before.

So, let's look at some of the basic rules for the use of visual aids regardless of which particular visual aid you'll be using. All visual aids should be simple, the purpose of the aid is as it states, to be the aid and not take over the whole of your presentation and make you as the presenter redundant. Now, this does not mean with the advent of computer graphics when animation, colour and sound is so readily available that you shouldn't use it, far from it. In the right circumstances lively computer generated presentations have their part to play. However, like all new toys you and I must not get carried away with the obvious power of new technology, nothing is more likely to get your audience groaning than the over use of any visual technique in your presentation. By the word *simple*, I mean simple designs, simple words, simple layouts in fact, simple everything. Obviously, although perhaps not so judging by the number of scruffy visuals that I've seen over the years, all visuals should be neat and tidy. The visual aid is as important to the audience's perception of you as your clothes, briefcase and car. Remember for every one including the audience, perception is reality. If the visuals that you use are out of alignment, obviously old and look as if they've seen better days and care then this will reflect badly on everything you say and unfortunately reflect badly on you. Remember, as I've said on a number of occasions, *you have to be believed to be heard*.

Your believability will be created or destroyed by your graphics and the way in which you use them. The purpose of any visual aid is to enhance your presentation and not detract from it. Homer said *The mind is more slowly stirred by the ear than the eye*. It's often been said that we remember about 5% of what we hear, 25% of what we see and

90% of what we do. If this is the case, and I'm certain that you and I would agree with those percentages or the fact that they seem reasonable, then the visual aids that you use have five times the impact of the words you say.

This links perfectly to our previous discussion of body language where the Mehrabian study indicated that the body language impact in communication was eight times that of the spoken word. You'll remember that his percentages were 7% *what we say*, 38% *how we say what we say* and 55% *body language*, so with these figures in mind, extreme care must be taken with the preparation of any visuals to ensure that they match, not only with the content of what you say but with the style and expectation of the audience. It's so simple to distract the audience from your central theme by having the wrong visuals or indeed the wrong type of visuals. Using a flipchart in front of an audience of 500 would not in my opinion be the right thing to do. Using computer generated presentation via backlit projection onto a 10'x10' screen in front of three people would similarly be inappropriate. The type of presentation, visual presentation you decide to use must therefore be totally appropriate to the size of audience you're speaking to.

If you decide to use an acetate presentation on an overhead projector or a computer presentation such as PowerPoint then there are a number of key points which I should cover now; The font – The font or type face you decide to use will make a difference to the way in which your message is received and perceived, at best you only want to use two font styles throughout your presentations and I would suggest to you that for headlines and subheads you use a sans serif type face and for the main body of your presentation, for your graphics, you use a serif type face. A sans serif type is one without the curly bits, the descenders, whereas a serif typeface is one with the descenders. The typeface *Arial* is a typical sans serif font, *Times Roman*, *Times New Roman* and *Century Schoolbook* are typical examples of serif fonts. My personal preference is to use *Century Schoolbook* for parts of the presentation. This type face was and is commonly used, not surprisingly, in school books and is therefore recognised and read very easily by everybody.

The size of the font is always important. If you're speaking to let's say only fifty people at a company meeting and have decided to use an overhead projector and a reasonably small screen then probably 24 point would be ideal; with a larger audience, particularly with a long deep room, then you'll need to experiment with the font size to ensure that it can be seen from the back of the room. The reason I suggest to you that you use a large font or a reasonably large font size is that with this larger font you'll be unable to put too much information onto each acetate or each slide and that is good news. With all visuals; flipcharts, overheads or computers stick to a maximum of three lines or three ideas per page. Great lines of type, small fonts and simply too much information per page are impossible for the audience to read, understand or remember. Let me reiterate this point, only three lines of type or a maximum of three ideas should be on any page. Personally I only ever use one idea per page and as the majority of my presentations are computer generated there's no additional expense for anyone in using ten pages rather than three pages. I can understand why some people, if they're using paper, would be somewhat reticent to use more than necessary but with computer generated graphics

shown by a video projector onto a screen, I certainly do not understand why so many people try to squeeze so much information onto one slide. Perhaps this is a hangover from the days of actual slides which cost a reasonable amount of money to have made. For most people the days of using actual slides rather than computer slides have gone, simple slides, simple words and simple ideas explained are what the audience wants and needs.

It is necessary with all visuals to maintain continuity; if this is an overhead projection presentation with acetate or computer presentations then use the same font throughout the presentation, the same background and the same colours. Make absolutely certain that your headlines and subheads appear at the same point on the page, nothing is more distracting as you change slides than for headlines to move about. When you have to use figures in your presentations then again, make absolutely certain they can be read from all parts of the room and that you keep to the minimum of information on each page. Wherever possible break down the figures into manageable chunks so that they'll be more easily understandable. As you'll see on the video part of the programme, use icons instead of figures and this will make your presentation of financial information far more understandable and memorable. If it is necessary for you to use a graph of some description then make certain that the words labelling the two axis of the graph are horizontal. When you change slides or pages then give the audience a chance to read the slide before you begin to speak about it. Remember that the purpose of the slide is to enhance your presentation and not replace it; do not try to include all the words you wish to say on the slide itself, simply have the key words on the slide and then expand on the idea with your talk. If you allow the audience a few moments to read the slide before you begin to speak, then you'll *open the files in their minds*, so that they're in the appropriate frame of mind in order to receive the information you wish to put over.

Now, let's look at flipcharts. First a general discussion on the way to use a flipchart and then a number of advantages and disadvantages you can consider for using a flip chart for your presentations. Let's imagine the situation that you're to speak at a team meeting and that you've decided to hold this meeting at a local hotel. The hotel is providing the flipchart and paper; there are a number of things you'll need to check. First, the height of the flipchart. Most flipcharts, though not all of them, have adjustable legs, which are able to slide into a piece of the main tubing of the flipchart frame, and they are retained by a spring button on each leg. Being tall I find that I always have to adjust the height of the flipchart to its maximum to avoid bending as I write on the paper, so check the height of the flipchart and make certain it's comfortable for you. Remember that you may want to use the whole of the paper and have to bend to write towards the bottom of the page. In fact, on this point it is perhaps better to use only the top half of the flip chart as it looks somewhat ungainly to be bent over trying to write horizontally on the page.

Where the flipchart itself has been provided by an outside source, in this case the hotel, make absolutely certain that you check every single page of the flip chart prior to your presentation. Why do I say this? Simply because I remember one occasion in the middle of a presentation at a hotel when I turned the flipchart page only to find that some joker had written an unacceptable word slap bang in the middle of the flipchart



page. Because there was a great deal of rapport with the audience it didn't present a problem. However, it could have been extremely embarrassing. Perhaps you'll learn from my experience and check every single page prior to speaking if the flip chart is being provided by somebody else.

The position of the flipchart in relation to the audience is obviously important and as I discussed with seating arrangements, you'll need to ensure that everyone can see what you write on the page. Take your normal speaking position at the front of the room and position the flipchart to the side of that speaking position. Obviously in this way you will speak from slightly off centre of the front of the room. You'll need to stand at the side of the flipchart when you write on it. Don't stand in front of it as you want the audience to be able to see what you're writing as you're writing it. One of the advantages of using a flipchart is that it's highly interactive.

Now, perhaps the most important point when using a flipchart – do not write and speak at the same time. The paper of the flipchart will soak up your voice and if there are a number of people in the room those at the back will not be able to hear what you say. If you're wearing a microphone and using a loud speaker system then you can get away with it, however, it's a good habit to get into that you write then speak, speak then write. Sometimes you may use a whiteboard instead of a flip chart and in these circumstances you may be able to speak to the board as you write, provided you raise your voice slightly. This can work because the hard surface of the white board will bounce your voice back to the audience. This said, it's still not a good idea to speak to the board, far better to write and then speak.

The basic rules of all presentations, namely *keep it simple*, obviously applies to flipcharts. At the absolute maximum put three ideas on each page, however, I would strongly suggest that you simply keep to one idea per page. With a number of people in the room it may be difficult for those at the back to see what you've written on the lower half of the flip chart paper and therefore keeping to one simple idea upon which you can expand is far better. Remember that what you write on the flipchart is only to focus the audience's mind on what you will say and not to replace what you'll say. The pens you use for flip chart presentations are important, pens where the felt tip is too small should not be used. I suggest that you use chisel tip pens as they're able to draw thick and thin lines, use at least four colours in your flip chart presentations and if this is a regular occurrence for you then have your own pens. Make certain that the pens are fresh or that you replace the covers, the flip chart pens have a habit of drying up. If you're writing on a white board then prior to your talk or speech make certain, and this is extremely important, that you're using the right type of pen, as certain types cannot be erased from the board. When you write on a flip chart use lower case letters rather than capitals as they're far easier to read, keep your writing neat and tidy and if like me you have a tendency to angle your writing down the page as you write your sentences, and you'll see a tendency of this on the video then use paper which is pre-printed with small squares. If you know that your talk or presentation is going to use a great deal of paper and it will be necessary to change the flipchart pages at some stage, then familiarise yourself with the changing mechanism. Some flipcharts have two large screws built into the top of the frame whilst others have a quick-change mechanism where you can push

the flipchart pad into a sprung bar. If you know the number of pages you use and the flipchart holder is capable of taking that many pages then I suggest you put them all in prior to the start of your talk. As you'll see on the video part of this programme one of the main tips in using flipcharts in presentations is to have pencil notes on the top right-hand corner of the flipchart paper. Your audience will not be able to see these pencil notes and it can in fact mean that you don't have to carry speech notes at all. Whilst your talk or meeting is proceeding and you suddenly get a flash of inspiration and think yes, I must talk about that idea to the audience you can make a simple pencil note which the audience still won't be able to read and then you won't miss the opportunity to talk about the brilliant thought that came to you.

If you wish to have drawings on your flipchart paper then the easiest way to do that is the following: take the drawing concerned and photocopy it onto acetate. Using an overhead projector, project the drawing onto your flipchart paper and trace around the image in pencil. You can then colour it in either on the day or prior to the meeting. This is a brilliant way of having well-drawn pictures for flip chart presentations. Children love this idea, they use it to decorate their rooms, perhaps their bedrooms. Taking a drawing you go through the same process, photocopy it onto acetate, then with an overhead projector shine it on the bedroom wall. The children can do the tracing and colouring. If you wish to do the final day of your presentation then when you've projected the image onto your flipchart page, instead of tracing it with a pen or a pencil, trace it with either chalk or egg white, providing that the lighting in the room is in the right place, then the audience will not see the tracing and you'll be able to create an instantaneous, brilliant well drawn picture. Now let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of flipchart presentations, let's start with advantages;

- 1) They're instant. Flipcharts give you the opportunity to record instantly any information, which may come out of the meeting.
- 2) They're reactive. You can even get other people involved in the presentation as everyone has the ability to write on a flipchart.
- 3) They're colourful. You have total choice as to how colourful you make your presentation.
- 4) Audience involvement. If a member of your audience asks a question or wishes to make a point, you can record that input on the flipchart.
- 5) Variable. You can use a flipchart whilst using an overhead projector or even a computer presentation and use the flipchart to record points which are raised.
- 6) Building rapport. Using a flipchart is a great way to be involved with an audience and gives you the opportunity to interact with them in such a way that you're able to build good relationships and rapport.
- 7) Crossing out. There are times on all presentations when you want to make a particular point by writing something down and then crossing it out. For example: the price of a new product, the new commission scale for a sales team and then crossing it out to show that it's not going to be that high after all. This is best done with a different colour or with a single line through the old figure and then you could write the new figure. This technique is called *Hertz and rescue*.
- 8) Hand drawn pictures. As I've explained, being able to hand draw a brilliant picture on a flipchart, live, is a great advantage.

- 9) Brainstorming sessions. Tearing off the flipchart pages and sticking them around the room will let everyone see all of the ideas at the same time.
- 10) They're easily moveable. A flipchart can be moved around the room with little difficulty, which does not apply to overhead projection or computer use.
- 11) Foldable. Collapsible flipcharts are easily available and if you find that you give a number of presentations and do not wish to rely on the hotel or meeting venue to provide the flipchart then it's very simple to have your own and it can, in fact, be a confidence anchor.

Now let's look at the disadvantages of flipchart presentations. These days with the regular use of laptop computers many people think that a flipchart presentation is not professional - without careful writing it can look scruffy. Pre-done pages may look somewhat contrived and flipcharts are only really effective with a small number of people in the audience. Pens leak or run out and cannot be erased. Then there is the problem of changing the paper and of course, the problem at all flipchart presentations is that it's extremely easy to trip over the legs of the flipchart holder. I know, I've done it on a regular basis. Despite these disadvantages there are many opportunities and occasions when the flipchart still has it's part to play, and you must decide prior to your presentation or talk exactly what you are trying to achieve and the method by which you wish to achieve.

Now let's look at overhead projection, some basic ideas and then the advantages and disadvantages. If you're going to use overhead projection then it will be necessary to keep your acetates in a binder of some description. Put your name and address on the binder in case you lose it. Keep the acetates in acetate folders specially designed for the job. Use coloured acetates in order to enliven the presentation. You can use acetate on a roll and this can be very effective if you wish to make the whole presentation as interactive and instantaneous as possible. If you decide to go this route or use blank acetate then you'll need to have very fine point pens. Once what you've written is projected onto the screen then any errors are magnified. Perhaps the one thing you should always avoid with the use of acetate projection via the use of an overhead is the slow revealing of hidden points. I'm certain you've seen this type of presentation; the presenter has perhaps six points on an acetate and with a piece of card slowly reveals each point. The audience feels techniqued. Many times the presenter slips and reveals too many points too quickly and in fact the whole thing smacks of a total lack of professionalism. You should certainly avoid standing in front of the light of the overhead projector unless you intend to create a shadow show for your audience. Always check the spelling, as again any errors will quickly be spotted by the audience members. Let's look at the advantages of overhead projection.

- 1) Printed information can be used whereas with the flipchart it will only be hand-written.
- 2) Pictures can be photocopied onto acetate and shown via overhead projection which can enliven any presentation.
- 3) If you wish to show a hand-drawn picture then you can place a piece of acetate over the picture, trace the image and show it in your presentation.

- 4) Lively – certainly overhead projector presentations are extremely lively with the amount of movement that needs to take place in order to move the acetates from the overhead and then replace them with the new acetates. By the same token, overhead projection is extremely flexible.
- 5) Changeable – now by this I mean that as the audience will not know how many acetates you are to use or in which precise order you'll use them then you're easily able to miss acetates out or show them in any order without anybody being any the wiser.
- 6) Control – as the presenter you have total control of the overhead projector. You can switch it on or off or change acetates entirely at your timing.
- 7) Larger audience – provided that the screen is of sufficient size and can be seen from the back then overhead projection can be used for a large audience. I've certainly used OHP presentations in front of 400 people.
- 8) Acceptable – despite the growth in laptop and computer presentations, the OHP is still a very acceptable way to present visual information.

Now let's look at the disadvantages.

- 1) Lighting – if the room in which you do your presentation or speech is too well lit then it may be difficult for your audience to be able to see the information on the screen. You may need to reduce the lighting in the room.
- 2) Bulbs – overhead bulbs do blow and it will be necessary to check that spare bulbs are available.
- 3) One of the challenges I've found with overhead projection, particularly when using the roll of acetate, is that you have to move forwards and slightly to the side in order to write on the acetate. When you do this for a long period it can create aches and pains.
- 4) Messy – overhead projection with its associated bundles of acetates, spare bulbs and the like can be a messy operation, perhaps not what you're trying to achieve.
- 5) The key stone effect – if the screen on which you are to project is not angled forward and is left flat against a wall then you'll suffer from the key stone effect where the projected show on the screen is not properly aligned. In this case the effect can be removed by moving the top of the screen approximately one foot further forward than the bottom of the screen.
- 6) Switching – another disadvantage of the overhead projector is that it's necessary at times to switch it off. I've seen presentations where the presenter switched off the overhead after each slide. This did not work well and should be avoided.
- 7) Cables – because the projector needs to be connected to an electricity supply you'll have a cable running from it. Ensure that the cable is contained in a cable cover or taped to the floor.

Flexibility and easy use of the overhead projector still makes it one of the easiest visual aids to use. However these days, more and more presentations and more and more talks and speeches are given accompanied by computer-generated graphics.

Now let's look at some general information on computers and then the advantages and disadvantages of using them. With the growth of the number of people who use computer presentations and laptop presentations, I certainly feel these days that the use of slides is out of date. It may be that certain information is held on slides so therefore now is the time for them onto the computer. If you decide to use a computer presentation then back lit, when space allows, is far better than projection from the front. The challenge with projection from the front, and this is the same challenge with overhead projection, is walking in front of the slide projector and creating a shadow on the screen, so, where possible use back lit projection. The size of the room in which you speak will change the amount of light that you need for this projection, so always check before the event.

As I've mentioned to you on a number of occasions even if you're using a computer presentation you must be the presenter or speaker and not simply the technician. On the point of animation, transitions and sound, these are intended to help you enliven your presentation and not intended to be the presentation itself. Minimise the use of these additional features and you'll ensure that the audience listen carefully to what you're saying and will not simply be waiting for the next typewriter effect as words type themselves onto your screen. The background that you use for your computer presentations is extremely important in order to make the words and pictures stand out. I would strongly recommend the use of dark blue for computer presentations with yellow words, this is very easy to see. On overhead projection it's far better to use a light background with dark words.

If you are to make a presentation to a client then here is a special tip, which will help you personalise your computer presentations: if the client has a web site on the Internet you can download the background of the client's web page and their logo to use as the background for your computer presentation. This is very easy to do and this is how to do it: Once you're on the web page then right click with your mouse and select *save as* and a file name of your choice, then in PowerPoint if that's what you use, simply select the insert menu picture from file. You can then resize the picture to create the background of your slides, similarly if you wish to use the client's logo in the presentation this can be downloaded in the same way. When using computer presentations, you'll need to switch to the next slide, the next graphic by use of the keyboard controls, a mouse or a remote control device. Whatever, do not comment on the way in which the slides come down or the time it takes for transition, you should make no comment whatsoever about the logistical part of your presentation. The audience simply doesn't and any comment by you will detract from your believability, your professionalism and the way in which the audience will receive what you say. Such comments as *If I can get this to work* or *I'm not really very good with computers* should never be used.

Now let me give you some further great ideas for computer presentations: to save you looking at the projection screen and to find out where you are there are two simple solutions; either have a small mirror which you can keep on the lectern just in front of you so you can see the reflection of what's on the screen, albeit reversed, or have a second computer monitor positioned in front of you so you can see exactly what's on

the screen behind you. This will definitely save you having to make that most basic error of reading from the screen. So let's look at the advantages of the computer presentation:

- 1) It's professional - Certainly the computer presentation and the ability to use pictures from the Internet, animation and sound will make your presentation look extremely professional.
- 2) It's changeable - Despite what many people think it's very easy to alter a computer presentation. You may have a standard client presentation that you give and simply changing the names may be all you need to do.
- 3) Audience size - Laptop presentations are ideal for just a few people and the exact same presentation to many thousands of people via video will certainly work well.
- 4) Pictures - As I've described it's easy to get pictures from the Internet or from a special computer pictures, programme in order to make your presentation exciting and memorable.
- 5) Animation - A small amount of animation, perhaps with words coming onto screen from different points can work wonders. However as I've said be careful with over use.
- 6) Charts - The demonstration of charts via computer graphics is a perfect way to put over your point. Bar graphs, pie charts and the like can make it very easy for the audience to understand exactly what you're trying to say.
- 7) Cost - The cost of normal slides, the type used in a carousel is high and I know that over the years this cost has risen. Computer presentations, changeable at a moment's notice, cost nothing but time.
- 8) Handouts - The ability of modern computer programmes to print handouts in a variety of formats is extremely useful. As you'll see on the video I use three slides per page both for notes and the audience handouts. This format with lines on the right-hand side of each of the slides is ideal for note taking.
- 9) Remote control - Unlike the overhead projector when the acetates need to be changed, computer presentations with remote control devices, particularly infra-red devices, are perfect for smooth changes of the images on the screen.
- 10) Back lit - Projection from the back of the screen is great. There are no shadows to be created. The audience members can clearly see the screen without the projector getting in the way and it looks extremely professional.
- 11) Easy to create - I certainly cannot claim to be a computer wizard. However, with a little bit of practice, I've been able to increase my skills in creating and preparing extremely effective computer presentations.

Courses and seminars are readily available on this subject, *Visual Aids*, and if you have to spend more of your time standing and speaking up for yourself then such courses or time spent practising will be time well invested. Now let's look at the disadvantages.

- 1) Exposure - If the exposure of the projector is wrong it can make it very difficult for the audience to be able to read the slides.
- 2) Disks - It certainly pays dividends to save your computer presentation onto disk. If you're going to take your own computer to your presentation or talk then you'll need to take along your disk as well just in case your computer doesn't work, and

it's always worthwhile sending the disk to the organiser prior to an event if you're not going to use your own computer.

- 3) Lamps - As with the overhead projector the video projector for your computer presentation has lamps or bulbs and these can blow.
- 4) Cables - The more equipment you use, the more cables will be left lying around which can be dangerous for both you and the audience members. So make sure they're in cable covers or taped to the floor.
- 5) Too slick - If the presentation or talk you have to give is to give the impression of a casual conversation then the computer presentation can appear just too professional.
- 6) Lectern problems - Very often when a laptop is used to control the computer presentation the laptop is situated at the lectern and you can feel that you have to stay at the lectern position. Presentations are far better if you're not tied to one particular position and you're able to move about as the mood takes you. If the laptop must be situated at the lectern then perhaps the audio visual company may have an infra-red remote control which will give you freedom of movement.
- 7) Controller confusion - Because the infra-red controller or hard-wired controller is extremely sensitive in operation, it's easy to move forward too many slides and in correcting it move backwards too many. I know that you'll have seen this and it really does create confusion. The presenter becomes confused and so does the audience and although this may cause some hilarity with the audience it certainly doesn't look very professional.

So to sum up computer presentations. They are now certainly the way of the world and if you've not yet come to terms with an appropriate computer presentation package, may I suggest that now is the day. Computer presentations are extremely flexible and can enable you to show information in a variety of different formats. Pictures, sound or video when appropriately used can all add to the power of your message and the understanding of the audience of exactly what you're trying to say. Remember that we remember approximately 5% of what we hear, 25% of what we see and 90% of what we do. The visual aid part of your presentation will be far better remembered than the words you say and the effect on the audience may be as much as 5 or 8 times the impact of simply what you've said. During the course of this section I've shared with you a number of key ideas, methods and techniques regarding the effective use visual aids. Remember keep all your visual aids simple; maintain continuity of colour, font and size. Never speak to the screen; always speak to the audience. Let the audience read the graphics before you speak about the subject and avoid the over use of visual technology. If you take the time to prepare effective visual aids, if you take the time to practise with them and if you take the time to present them to the audience so they hardly know they existed and yet are moved by your presentation, you will have succeeded.

Now that we've got this far in the programme it's time to look at actually doing it. We've already covered many, many things. Let's just take a moment and review what we've done so far; we've looked at benefits, persuasiveness, the audience, clothing, planning, nerves, logistics, writing your speech, opening and closing, questioning skills, the use of language, your body language, the audience's body language and visual aids. During this section as we are looking at doing it, in other words *standing and speaking up*

on any occasion, we'll cover the following areas: picking up the rapport of the previous speaker, getting attention, a checklist of self questions including a preview review, attitude, dealing with interruptions, the audience and style. When you've listened to this section of the programme you'll feel even more confident by knowing that you will know exactly how to deliver your speech, your presentation or your talk. By now you have many of the key skills, attitudes, methods and techniques which will enable you to prepare, plan and present on any occasion.

So, let's get started and look at picking up the rapport of the previous speaker. On many occasions when you speak you'll not be the first person to speak to that meeting, so on this occasion you have the opportunity to pick up the rapport or to decide to avoid picking up the rapport of the previous speaker. This decision will be based on your perception as to how the audience has received the previous speaker and his or her message. If your perception is that the previous speaker or talker has built a great deal of rapport with the audience then naturally you want to capitalise on that relationship. This is what to do. If the previous speaker is the person who will introduce you then having approached the front of the room or stage, shake hands with the speaker so the audience can see that you have a good relationship with that person. If the previous speaker is not the one to introduce you then it'll be more difficult to pick up the rapport, the rapport they've built with the audience. If there is a break such as a coffee break or a lunch break after the previous speaker then if possible spend time with that speaker during the break. If you perceive that the previous speaker has not created the rapport with the audience or may in fact have antagonised the audience then the last thing you want to do is to make a connection with that speaker and have the audience, even before you speak, believe that you are the same. It is for this reason that you must understand how much rapport has been built with the audience by a previous speaker or speakers and that's why it's essential, wherever possible, to hear and see the previous presentations. If this is possible then make a mental note or written note as to the anchors that they've created; I'll go into greater detail of how to anchor things on the stage later.

When you stand to speak it's absolutely essential that you get the attention of the audience before you say a single word. You recall that we talked about *Wiscdar* during the writing of your speech part of the programme. In the delivery part you can add *Paidar* and it stands for; *planning, attention, interest, desire, action* and *result*. As you realise this is very similar to "Wiscdar" and why I'm mentioning it to you is the use of the *A* in the expression. The *A* stands for *attention* and until you have the audience's attention, there is little point in starting. There are a number of ways to get the audience's attention; the first one is silence and I've discussed this before. Simply standing there saying nothing for a few seconds, casting your eyes about the audience, will certainly get their attention. The second way is graphics; a good opening graphic accompanying your silence will also get attention. Lighting – in a stage presentation a change of lighting will let the audience know that something different is about to happen, and of course, voice tones – if your voice is very different from previous speakers then this will also get attention.



Now let's look at a checklist of questions which you could ask yourself just before you're about to do it. You'll certainly want to undertake a brief preview review, this is where you mentally or perhaps better, in written form, create a brief report for yourself as though you'd actually finished your speech. You'll focus on the positive results that you've achieved both for the audience and yourself and by so doing be totally prepared to stand and speak up for yourself. Here are twenty areas you need to check:

- 1) Notes - Do you have your notes and in a stage presentation are they already on the lectern?
- 2) Questions - Have you prepared the questions you'll ask and given thought to what you will be asked. Remember you'll need to tell the audience whether or not you're taking questions throughout the presentation or if there is to be a question and answer session at the end of your talk.
- 3) Pens - Do you have the appropriate pens?
- 4) Acetates - Do you have the acetates and are they at the side of the overhead projector?
- 5) Computer - Is the computer connected? And have you checked with the audio-visual people that everything is ready to go?
- 6) Spare bulbs - Have you arranged for spare bulbs to be available?
- 7) Leads - Have you got all the appropriate leads?
- 8) Numbers - Have you numbered the pages of your speech or 3"x5" cards?
- 9) Practice - Simply run through your opening, a few words in your mind, just prior to standing and speaking.
- 10) Nerves - Go through your calming processes and nerve eradication methods, just prior to speaking.
- 11) Clothes - Check that your clothes are neat and tidy, that your tie's done up and so is your zip.
- 12) Nose - Blow your nose.
- 13) The restroom - Use the facilities.
- 14) Wash your hands and dry them thoroughly.
- 15) Re-anchor your confident feelings.
- 16) Re-focus on your goals.
- 17) Read the key word notes of your speech.
- 18) Read the closing of your speech.
- 19) Undertake your breathing exercises.
- 20) Smile to yourself.

If you undertake that checklist which you can have in written form and of course, any other questions which you feel are relevant for you, then you will be totally prepared to stand and speak up. Your attitude will be a key factor in doing it. If you have a negative attitude, running such programmes in your mind as *I'm nervous, why did I agree to do this?* then you'll not be properly focused. You and I know that the attitude that you display at the start of any task will determine how well you perform the task. This is exactly the same when we stand and speak. The last four letters of the word *Enthusiasm* namely *i, a, s, m* stand for *I am sold myself*. That is exactly what enthusiasm means. It always pays to be enthusiastic. Now this doesn't mean that you need to go

over the top, far from it, but the appropriate level of enthusiasm based on your knowledge of the audience and the situation will certainly carry you through. The audience will always perceive your level of enthusiasm for your subject; your enthusiasm may be created because you know you'll make a major difference to the audience members and it's possibly a subject which, as they say, will change their lives.

You'll have certainly seen speakers who have enthusiasm for what they have to say and that enthusiasm rubs off onto the audience members. You'll recall that one of the keys for memory is enthusiasm and the more enthusiastic you are the more enthusiastic the audience will be.

Now let's look at interruptions and what you can do about them. I've found that the main interruption to speeches and presentations are such things as coughing, something being dropped, staff interruptions, feedback from the PA system and the fire alarm. Let's examine each of those in turn. Coughing; this can happen in any audience, particularly if the room is warm, you'll definitely get coughing then. If it's only a small amount you can ignore it totally. It may be necessary to repeat certain points if you feel that the coughing has overridden what you have to say. If you find that there is one particular person who is suffering from a tickly cough then treat that person as though they were a member of your family. What would you do if a member of your family had a such a cough? You'd be sympathetic and offer a solution, do exactly the same. As a professional presenter I carry cough sweets, not just for my use, they're for giving out to audience members who are suffering from a cough, this is no technique on my part, it's for my benefit and it's for the audience members' benefits and for the benefit of the person concerned. If one person is coughing throughout the presentation then it could put me off, it will certainly stop the audience hearing what I say and will be awkward for the person concerned. Passing out cough sweets certainly builds rapport.

Often things are dropped at presentations, this may be a glass or a coffee cup by a member of the audience or a hotel staff member, it could be a table falling over or it could be you dropping your notes. If the interruption is minor then simply ignore it, if it's been a major distraction with the audience then by all means make comment. This needs to be a light-hearted comment and not one that makes anyone in the audience feel awkward. If a hotel staff member should happen to drop a cup, then don't make them feel embarrassed. I'm certain you wouldn't do this anyway and the audience will certainly not appreciate your comments. If you should drop your notes or sweep them off the lectern or table by mistake then simply keep on talking, stoop down picking up the notes and go on. If the dropping of a coffee cup or glass of water means that somebody's notes or your notes have been spoiled then take a break, solve the problem and then carry on. If members of staff come in to change coffee cups, perhaps to set up a table at the back of the room for the next break or whatever and this interrupts your presentation then you must make a decision. You need to show the audience that you are in control and do it appropriately. As I've said you don't make the person feel embarrassed in any way whatsoever, this will negg out your audience members. If it's a major interruption, then stop and ask the audience a question. Involve them in a question and answer session or an interactive exercise until the problem has passed.

Feedback from the public address system can be a problem and this is usually caused by walking in front whilst carrying and wearing a microphone which is switched on. In your preparation stage prior to your speech, check the area in which you'll be able to walk without creating feedback and have conversations with the audio visual technician, to ensure that volume levels will not create this annoying problem. The other possible problem with a radio mike system is that it may be on the same frequency as somebody else, I've had this happen on a number of occasions. Once giving a presentation to about fifty people in a hotel one evening, we found that the radio mike was on the same frequency as the local taxi firm, you can imagine the hilarity that this caused. All I could do was make light of the situation and carry on. Fortunately, it was obviously the taxi outside the hotel, which was causing the problem and not the base station of the taxi firm. With such a major interruption, it cannot be ignored and so it is necessary to involve the audience in the problem. If the problem had persisted, I would have had to continue without the use of the radio mike.

Here's a special tip for when it comes to the use of radio microphones; let's say that you're at the back of the room waiting to be introduced and have switched off the transmitter box of your microphone. As you walk towards the stage, you'll need to remember to switch on the microphone and you do so, but unfortunately at that time, you're immediately in front of one of the speakers and the loud speaker and the feedback whistle nearly deafens the audience! I've certainly done it. Make sure that the microphone is switched on and that the technician knows to bring up the volume when you reach the front of the room or the stage.

If you're the organiser of an event and if not, you'll need to ask the organiser, you need to find out if a fire alarm practice is scheduled for the time you are to speak. If so, then warn the audience members. This should be done by the Master of Ceremonies, the audio visual people, the organisers or the first speaker. If you find unfortunately that the fire alarm does go off whilst you're speaking, then you must take control, you need to know where the fire exits are situated and direct people to them. I've had this happen and unfortunately it was only ten minutes into the presentation and some amusement had already been caused by the previous reference to fire alarm practise. Again the key to interruptions is to take control. As the speaker, the audience will look to you to be the leader. Following any interruption it will be necessary for you to summarise what you've already covered. Go back through your presentation, your acetates or your flipchart. You know that the audience's mind will have totally moved away from what you've said and therefore you'll need to re-open the files and re-focus their attention.

When you've started your speech with your three openings, then tell the audience the logistics of the day. Let them know the times of the coffee breaks, the lunch breaks and the agenda. Again this is based on you taking control, issuing clear instructions to the audience which you'll find they're happy to follow. As you move into the body of your speech let the audience say *yes*, if only in their minds early on. This lets them know that they can be involved in the presentation or speech. It puts them into a positive mode by the *yes* answer and starts to build rapport. By the same token it's also a good idea to let the audience say *no* early in your presentation. This *no* lets the audience know that they do have a choice, very often a series of *yes* answers will make the audience feel that

you're using a technique. However, the ability to say *yes* and the use of the ability will additionally build rapport.

If you have to ask the audience to agree to your ideas perhaps, then it's far better to ask for more than you'll need or as it's called *asking for the moon* rather than to try and move up towards your goal. On the other hand if you have to ask the audience to agree to the cost of something then it's far better to break that cost down into bite-size chunks. In the sales business this is called *Reduction to the ridiculous*. Let me give you an example of this. Let's say you're making a presentation to a client regarding their possible purchase of a new machine costing £5000.00. This may seem a large amount to the client but if the machine is to last for five years then the investment is just £1000.00 per year or £20.00 per week. This £20.00 per week whether it's pounds or dollars may seem a far more acceptable figure as the client is more easily able to understand the investment and the potential return. Now this is not to assume that the client can't cope with mathematics, far from it, however, most people find it easier to deal with small numbers than they do to deal with large numbers.

If you believe that the audience will have certain objections to the things you're going to say, then it's well worthwhile bringing up those objections yourself and then answering them, rather than leaving it to a question asked by a member of the audience, e.g. you're giving a presentation to the board of directors and know that one of them has concerns regarding the implementation of your new idea. You'll be far better to bring that concern into the open and discuss it rather than leave it in that director's mind. As you make each of your points during the course of your speech, remember that people will be moved to take action based on the benefit for them and not simply on the factors or ideas you put forward. So each time you make a particular point, add further information as to how that point will impact on the audience members and how they'll benefit from the use of the information or by taking action with your ideas.

Now let's look at style. Surprisingly, the faster you speak the more likely the audience are to hold their attention on what you say and remember what you say. You can imagine that if I spoke to you now in a slow voice and if I continued doing this you'd probably fall asleep. The same applies to an audience. If, however, I continue to speak quickly then your mind doesn't wander off and find something else to do. There have been a number of studies undertaken with regard to the speed of the speakers' message and the audience's subsequent understanding and recall. All of those studies indicate that people remember and understand more when the speaker talks quickly. Do not be concerned that some people think you're speaking too quickly, despite that concern they will actually understand and remember. Now this is not to say that you speak quickly all of the time, far from it, a variation in pace is necessary.

Make your style one of audience involvement. If you're the only person speaking, if you're the only person moving, if you're the only person with the opportunity to walk about then the audience will feel that they're back at school, where perhaps unfortunately their memories are centred on sitting still and listening. The more involved the audience members are the more interested they will be in what you have to say and the more likely they will be to remember it and use it.

The pitch, inflection and tone of your voice will make a major difference to the way in which your message is received. The beauty of using a microphone is that you can use quiet tones and a low voice and still be heard. Wherever possible, opt for using a microphone. Once you're used to it you'll find it a great advantage. The inflection in your voice should match the words, there's little point in saying things like excited in a down tone voice, similarly if you're making a particular point that is important the lighter voice containing a smile is probably not the way to do it. This is why practise is so important. During the practice you can play with how you say the words, adding different inflections, different tones, different speed in an effort to find out which would create the maximum impact.

Despite the fact that I've mentioned this to you on a number of occasions and also covered it on the video, I must again make mention of the use of those two terrible expressions *er* and *um*. Whatever you do, you must avoid the repeated use of these expressions, nothing will rob your presentation of its power more easily, more quickly or more effectively than *um* and *er*. Start listening more actively to your own voice and you'll realise when you use these expressions. Use of the rubber band technique will certainly create a degree of away motivation, you'll soon find that these words have been removed from your vocabulary. The odd use of *um* and *er* is OK, it's the use of either of these expressions as your first word or their over use throughout your presentation which must be avoided.

When you stand to speak, you must make certain that the people at the back of the room are able to hear you. You can do this by lifting your head and speaking clearly to them. It's very easy to speak to those people who are closest to you and concentrate only on them. However, if you speak to the people at the back of the room you can be sure that the people at the front will hear you. Stand tall, speak out and make your point clearly, the people will understand what you say and enjoy the fact that you've said it, you need to use your voice to get people's attention.

The way in which you use your hands will also make a difference. Congruent movements will add power to your message. If you have to read from your notes then simply look down, see a few words, look up and say them. Whilst this may feel unnatural to start, as I've mentioned to you before, with practise you'll find that you're able to read as though it was a normal conversation. While you're doing it, avoid all negative expressions and negative movements. While most people are more likely to take action based on away motivation, they definitely respond well to positive words and positive actions.

So let me summarise what we've covered in this brief section on doing it: first, picking up the rapport of the previous speaker, getting attention before you deliver the message and, of course, at any speech or presentation it will be necessary to get the audience's attention before you deliver a key point. We've covered a checklist of questions to make certain you're totally prepared, making certain that you have a positive and enthusiastic attitude, dealing with interruptions, letting the audience know the rules, raising objections, *reduction to the ridiculous* and using the right style and getting attention. Let me reiterate, despite common thought to the opposite, a quickly spoken presenter will

hold the audience's attention and get them to remember what's been said far better than a very slowly spoken person. If you get totally focused on the audience's benefit, if you have an enthusiastic attitude and if you speak with confidence taking total control, then you can ensure that during every opportunity you have to stand and speak up, you will really enjoy the moment and so will your audience.

In this next section of the programme I would like to share with you some ideas with regard to your voice, your delivery and winding up. The way in which you use your voice, the way in which you deliver your message will alter the way in which the audience understands and buys into what you say. So, over this first part of the section we'll look at enunciation, viewpoint, taking care of your voice, breathing, face and volume. Once you've mastered the use of your voice and know that you can use it in so many different ways to create so many different effects in the way in which you speak, then you'll be able to add life and colour to everything you say and the audience will enjoy what you say and remember more of it and look forward to the next time that they know you're going to speak. If you think now of all the speakers you've seen and heard over the years, I know that you have been surprised at times by the power of some of these speakers, despite their appearance. You only have to look at some of the great speakers in history to realise that many of them, despite my comments regarding knowing the book by the cover did not always present themselves in the best light. However, they did present their messages in the best light. Surprisingly, some studies on lying have indicated that we are able more easily to spot when someone is lying when we only hear them, rather than when we hear them and see them. This would seem to be in direct contradiction to the thoughts on body language that we've already discussed, I make the point in order to focus your mind particularly on the use of your voice and the delivery of your message. When you hear the speaker mumble their words you know that their concentration changes; instead of concentrating on the meaning of what they're saying, you need to concentrate on what they're saying, just to understand the words. It's therefore necessary to enunciate clearly exactly what you say and regular practise in this area will pay massive dividends in all the speaking opportunities which will present themselves to you.

When you're working from a written script take a great deal of care to ensure that the phrasing and sense of what you're saying comes over. Whenever there are difficult words or perhaps you believe they may not be known to all the audience members, make sure you clearly and carefully explain exactly what they mean. This doesn't mean that you need to talk as though you're speaking to a group of five-year-old children. You can, of course, use complex and complicated ideas provided that the audience already understand the context of what you're saying or that you clearly explain what you mean.

Here's another key idea for you with regard to delivery. Introduce each key idea or part of your talk separately, and summarise after each key part of an idea. This is essential as by introducing the idea, you will *open the files* in the audience's mind in order to make them receptive to what you have to say and by summarising after each point you make it easier for them to remember. For every point, you have to use the basics of *tell them what you're going to tell them, tell 'em it and then tell 'em what you told them*.

When you're delivering your talk or speech or presentation, you'll need to look out for, as I've mentioned before, any ambiguity that may be contained either within the words or within the syntax of your sentences. The classic example of syntactic ambiguity is *piano wanted for a lady with square legs*, only in this example it's obvious that it is the piano which would have the square legs and not the lady. However, many other forms of syntactic ambiguity slip through the net in the editing process. It's only when you're saying your words that you realise that you may not be saying exactly what you meant to say.

One of the main attributes of all successful speakers is that they have a congruent viewpoint. They know exactly who they are and have a firm opinion on those matters. The audience will expect you to be this type of person, for if you're prepared to change with every whim of the audience then they'll begin to disbelieve every thing you say. You are who you are and therefore cannot be anybody else therefore don't try to be. The audience may disagree with some of the ideas or thoughts you put forward, so be it, you're not there simply to agree with every idea that everybody else puts forward, you are there to put forward your opinion and tell the people how they'll benefit from your views.

In the various personal development seminars, which I deliver, I have a firm framework in my own mind regarding this point. Let me explain it now and perhaps by so doing you may change your mind on some of the speaking opportunities, which present themselves to you. I've found that it's impossible to please all of the people all of the time and therefore I don't try to do so. If on a personal development seminar, my purpose is to help the people be more successful by their own definition of success and I know that some people will be pushed out of their comfort zone. I mentioned to you before about the short poem about the mother eagle, *Come to the edge she said, they came, she pushed them, and they flew*. Now I know that my purpose in a self-development seminar is to bring people to the edge and push them off. Whilst most of them will fly, some may crash to the ground, this is not to be particularly hard, far from it. It is my intention to help everybody, in other words to help them to fly, however, experience tells me that if I don't push hard enough that I haven't really been true to myself or the members of the audience. It's exactly the same when the feedback form is use. If I haven't pushed hard enough then I'll get warm and fuzzy reports, these are of little use and certainly not very good feedback. However if some of the feedback forms indicate that I've pushed too hard for just a few people then I know that I pushed exactly at the right strength for the rest of the audience. Pick up on this idea. So many presenters I know are scared stiff to receive any negative feedback and because of this, they don't always give of their best and they under perform for both themselves and the audience members. Determine your point of view, be firm with your opinions, state your opinions clearly, openly and honestly and stick to your beliefs, by so doing you'll make yourself so different from the norm and people will respect you far more.

Now let's take a different tack for a moment. One of the occasions on which you may have to stand up and speak for yourself may be a social occasion such as a wedding, a party or even a funeral, for the moment I'm thinking more of the party or wedding. As your experience grows with speaking you may even decide to undertake some after

dinner speaking and therefore the following ideas will be relevant. Whilst obvious to say it nevertheless needs saying, be careful what you drink and eat. As the evening proceeds it can become quite easy to take another glass of Dutch courage, only to find that when the time comes to speak you don't feel 100 per cent. No doubt you've seen as I've seen over the years, the best man at weddings or even the bride's father slightly the worse for wear through drink. That special moment can be totally ruined by one aperitif too many, one toast too many or one after dinner drink too many. If you do drink alcohol and you know you'll be speaking later then take lots of water with it. What you eat can affect your voice and its best to avoid over-eating dairy products before speaking. The fat content can coat your larynx and you may find that your voice is not its normal self.

Your delivery and your voice will be affected by your breathing, so it is necessary to stand up straight if you're standing to speak and sit up straight if you're sitting and speaking. I've already been through the breathing exercises when we discussed dealing with nerves, so you know that some rhythmical deep breathing exercises will help calm you down and give you the necessary breath to enable you to deliver with power. If you are sitting on a tall stool or perhaps on the edge of a desk and have a tendency to lean forward this is a difficult position in which to breathe deeply. These sitting positions must ensure that you sit upright so you can breathe effectively and give your message with the best use of your voice.

Your face and the look on your face must obviously be congruent with the message you're putting out to the audience. If you have a serious point to make after a lighter point then take a moment to change the look on your face prior to talking about the serious part otherwise the audience will be in the wrong mood and the wrong mode to receive the style of this particular message. Similarly if you have a lighter or humorous story or anecdote to tell the audience then you need a break in the style if you've previously been discussing something serious. Before any humour smile at the audience so that they understand that you're about to make a humorous point – if you don't do so then the audience will be unsure if they should smile or even laugh. The main problem with a dry sense of humour is that it is often delivered with a flat face and the audience doesn't know if the presenter is making a serious or humorous point. This can be extremely disconcerting for the audience members; dry humour should be avoided on most occasions. It breaks the basic rules of *kiss*, in other words *keep it short and simple*. Be careful in using a broad smile as this can be easily misperceived as a false smile and as this is not the feeling you wish the audience members to have, your face must be natural and relaxed.

The golden rule as I've mentioned before in all presentations is to be yourself. Yes, as a presenter of any description you are on stage and therefore playing the part of an actor and to some degree acting, so it is necessary to be yourself within the confines of this acting role. The way in which you use your voice will obviously make a major difference to the way in which the audience will both understand what you say and agree with what you say. Use pauses of different lengths to make your different points.



Always use a pause before the opening, before the closing and before any important point, e.g. in the Blondin story as you'll see on the video I use a number of dramatic pauses, they are aptly named *dramatic pauses* as they do add drama to the situation. In the opening the pause can and will add power to what you say and be extremely effective at gaining the audience's attention and interest. A pause just before the close will re-focus the audience's attention and let them know that you're about to finish with power, with presence and with passion. Listen now to the difference between these two important points; *Now is the time for you to decide if the new system will reduce our losses, increase our effectiveness and increase our profits.* Here it is again but this with appropriate pauses; *Now is the time for you to decide ... if the new system will reduce our losses, increase our effectiveness and ... increase our profits.* Doesn't that make a difference? Now obviously for the sake of making this point I've used pauses which are slightly longer than I'd do so in real life.

Varying the length of the pauses makes a difference, so does the volume of your voice. Unless you're speaking to hundreds of people without the aid of a microphone and PA system it's not necessary to shout, if you shout you lose the tonality and pitch variations of your voice. The beauty of using a microphone is that you are able to speak in a low quiet voice and still make very powerful points, it is the changes in volume that will bring your presentation and your voice to life. The pitch in your voice will change the way in which the audience will perceive, understand and believe what you say. The lower pitch voice is invariably perceived, as being more authoritative whereas the higher pitched voice seems to lack authority. I would suggest that you use a calm tone and speak slowly for any important points in order to emphasise them and then the audience will easily perceive how important these points are. It is necessary to practise different pitches, different volumes and different tonality and it's only by practise that you and I learn how to use our voices to maximum effect. When you need to ask a question of the audience, one which you want them to answer, then it's obviously important that they realise that it is a question. The simple way to do this is to make your voice rise at the end of the sentence and that way everyone will understand that it's a question, won't they? Again, the simpler you make it for the audience to understand what you say, the more easily they will understand what you say, and take action with what you suggest. Prior to your speaking, if you're to speak in a room of any size and by that I mean a room which will contain forty or more people, then you need to give some thought to the volume of your voice. Forty people will soak up sound to a remarkable degree and if you have to speak for any amount of time, this can be tiring on the voice. If you're running a meeting or training session of any description which is going to be highly interactive, then you need to regain control of the audience on a number of occasions throughout the meeting and again you will find that this is tiring on your voice. Consider the use of a microphone and PA system.

Let me summarise then. In the first half of this section, we looked at enunciating clearly and taking care of ambiguity and difficult words, having a firm viewpoint and ensuring that you are congruent with who you are. Be careful with smoking and drinking because of it's effect on your voice and use your breathing exercise to eradicate the nerves. Sit or stand upright and make certain your face is calm and natural, make certain that prior to making a serious or humorous point that you've changed your face

accordingly so the audience knows how to react. Vary the volume, the pitch and the tonality and the pauses you use. If you use these ideas you'll find that people will react positively to you, believe what you say and take action with your ideas.

Now let's look at winding up prior to speaking, the first thing to realise is that you and I are able to be totally in control of the way in which we think. We can change our attitude by what we believe and the way in which we move our bodies. Here is a simple exercise for you to carry out when it's safe to do so. There are two versions of this exercise, one sitting down and one standing up. First the standing one; all you simply do is to leave the room you're in and after a few moments return acting as though you had no energy, no confidence and no belief in yourself. Make note of how you look, the position of your body, particularly your shoulders, your breathing pattern and how quickly or otherwise you walk. You now know that your body language and breathing pattern match how you feel and if you wish to feel like this, which I doubt you do, then you simply need to move in the no confidence, no energy, no belief manner. Simple isn't it? Now leave the room again and this time return feeling moderately confident with moderate energy and a moderate belief in yourself. Make note of how you look, how you feel, how you're breathing, what is your posture? What are your hands doing? Now you know how you act when you're feeling moderate. I know you're already ahead of me with stage three of this exercise, yes, on the third occasion you leave the room and return in high confidence mode, high energy mode and high belief mode. Make a solid mental note of how you look, how you walk, how you feel, how you believe, what you believe, where your shoulders, where your hands are, in fact, every single thing you can notice. Now you know precisely how to change your body language, your breathing and your posture in order to trigger high energy, high confidence and high belief. This is such a simple exercise and so often under used by so many people. Whenever you want to change the way you think then simply change the way you move, your physiology will change your attitude. You can do the same exercise in a sitting position by simply starting off feeling in low energy, no confidence and no belief mode and make a note how you're sitting, then changing your attitude until you feel in moderate energy, moderate belief, moderate confidence mode and again make note and then move into high energy, high confidence, high belief mode, make note again. You may notice that perhaps you clenched your fist or some similar movement and now you know the link between your high mode and your physical movements. So whenever you want to wind up before giving a speech, a presentation or a talk then you know that you can simply change your body language, the way in which you walk, the way in which you breathe and immediately you'll change the way in which you feel. What a great way to be able to prepare to stand and speak up on any occasion.

Here are three more ways in which you can wind up prior to speaking. First, in order to get into the right mood and right mode you can remember the good things which have happened in your life, e.g. you have certainly experienced many occasions when you felt confident or happy and simply by remembering them you'll probably feel confident and happy again. When we discussed anchoring and certainly the Superman method earlier in the programme, this was the same idea. Second, I mentioned earlier that standing and speaking is similar to being an actor on the stage, if this is the case and I'm

certain it is, then it's easy to pretend that that's all you are, an actor. If you're in a play or a film or had to play the part of someone who was to give a presentation then you simply act out the part. You can do the same. Imagine for a moment you're about to walk on stage at your local theatre and you're playing the part of barrister defending in a trial, you're about to give your closing address to the jury, you know that you would feel extremely confident being this person and being able to deliver that closing address with passion and power and presence. Standing and speaking on any occasion is no different, simply immerse yourself in the part, walk the part and act the part prior to standing and speaking for real. Third in order to wind up effectively you must run the right programme in your mind at all times. If you run negative programmes then you'll achieve negative results, if you run mediocre programmes then you'll achieve mediocre results, however if you run positive, powerful, self persuasive programmes then these will be the results that you will achieve. Earlier in the programme we looked at the expression, *What you say will be the way* and you now know that the words you say will encode your belief pattern and that this belief pattern will create your attitude which will in turn create leverage of towards and away motivation which will make you take action and give you the results of your programme. Whilst winding up is essential, it is also essential that you run the right programmes in your mind. Unfortunately most people who are inexperienced at standing and speaking on any occasion lock themselves into the belief pattern for all time, by the words that say to themselves that they can't do it, they confirm this belief by the words they say to others and unfortunately they believe the similarly negative programmes when uttered by those who really should know better. Now is the time and for all time, to run the powerful, positive and persuasive programmes which will convince you by your own words that you can wind up, that you can psyche up, that you can stand up and speak up on any occasion. So, let's summarise the second half of this section, we've looked at changing the way in which we feel by the way in which we walk, stand and breathe, remembering good times and pretending to be an actor who is presenting, and finally making certain that we're running the right programmes, remembering *What you say will be the way*. If you take these ideas, if you practise with them diligently and if you use them on every speaking occasion then your success as a speaker, as a presenter, as a person is guaranteed.

Now that we've covered so many different areas of how to *stand and speak*, it's time to look at how to undertake the correct type of practise, which will enable you to be even better at speaking. As the old expression says *Amateurs practise until they get it right, professionals practise until they cannot get it wrong*. It's strange that in so many areas of life, so many people don't take the time or the effort to practise their skills and yet time and time again it's been proven that those who practise do far better when it comes to the actual use of their skills and talents. Over the course of this section I'll cover the following areas; the fact that practise should always be for real; a self assessment test which you can use following the practise sessions and your real sessions; practising at home using audiotape, videotape and the mirror; and creating opportunities to speak. By the end of this section you'll know exactly how to practise and you'll become more comfortable than ever with your abilities and skills to stand and speak up on any occasion. If we look at any type of endeavour, social or commercial, then it's obvious that those who succeed are those who take the time to undertake practise.

Unfortunately so many people just wing it on the day and are then surprised that they've not performed to the expected level.

One of the expressions that I often use in my personal development seminars is this, *How many people do you know who never achieve the level of success that they're level of skill says they should?* Most people will answer this question with *Many!* I then follow this with *Why does this happen?* It isn't that people don't have the skills, it's that they don't practise those skills and get to the level of comfort where they can use the skills whenever an opportunity presents itself. All professionals practise their skills. If you look at professional sports people, they spend many hours and many days practising each part of their sport. Perhaps my favourite example is as you would expect, professional golfers, who practise each and every day hitting thousands of balls, only when it comes to tournaments to hit less balls. Professional footballers practise four or five days a week and yet they only have the opportunity to use their skills, the skills they've developed during those practise sessions, for perhaps ninety minutes on a Saturday afternoon.

These days more and more business people are taking the time to practise before any meeting of importance. Imagine that you're having an important meeting with your board of directors where you wish to put forward an idea which will radically change the whole business. Obviously it will be worth practising your presentation or talk to make absolutely certain that come the day you have the best chance of securing agreement. When it comes to the idea of practise, I like to frame it in this way, *Imagine that the next time you have to stand and speak up that the whole of your commercial future depends on your ability to stand and speak up.* Well, how well prepared would you be, how well practised would you be, how often would you have read the script, how careful would you be with any visuals or visual aids you had to use. I know the answer to all of those questions would be one word, *Very.* Very prepared, very practised, very many readings of the script, very careful with the visuals, in fact, very everything. Let me therefore with this frame in mind, give you some key thoughts and methods for actual practise sessions which can be extremely effective and will put you into the position whereby you'll know: exactly what you're going to say; exactly how you're going to say what you're going to say; the body language you will use; the tonality you'll use; in fact how to be totally prepared for the occasion.

All practise should be for real, now what do I mean by this? Simply, that when I hear people practising the words they're going to use for a presentation or speech, I often hear them speaking far faster than they normally would, missing parts out or pacing up and down with nervous anticipation. This is not practise, far from it, it's probably the worst thing that anyone could do. Whenever you practise, you must practise as though you're actually standing and delivering your talk, why? Simply because you'll build strong muscle memory and mental memory of the way in which you speak and the way in which you move your body when you speak. It's far better to take just a few sentences that you're going to say and practise those in precisely the way that you'll say them rather than gabble the whole of your speech. Use the tonality, use the speed, use the pauses, use the exact way in which you know that you wish to speak and create the effect you're trying to create and then when you come to speak at the real event, you'll

have a solid memory to fall back on. Let me give you an example of this. You've already heard me say that my standard opening is one that I've practised again and again and again. Imagine if my practise session involved me in rushing through that opening and remembering it as follows;

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be with you and, er, have the opportunity to share with you some of my er ... tried and tested and er ... proven ways to how we can be more successful ... regardless of our personal definition of that emotive word, *success*". Well, if I did it like this, when I came to speak I'd probably deliver it in the same way; my practise session must get me to remember it in the way in which I wish to do it, otherwise it isn't practise, it's simply reading the words. So I'll practise it in the following way;

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be with you and to have the opportunity to share with you some of my tried and tested and proven ideas for how we can be more successful regardless of our personal definition of that emotive word *success*." I cannot emphasise enough how important this point is, you must, I repeat, you must practise as though you were doing it for real; every single time you practise. Never, never, practise in any other way because you'll set up the wrong muscle memory and when under a degree of pressure on the day you're speaking you fall back to that memory, you'll find that you'll change the way you speak and start to use the words, the tonality, and the body language from your rushed practise session. If you only have limited time for practise, then practise your opening and closing, remember these are the parts that the audience will remember far more than any other.

When you practise, practise aloud, again this will train your voice to say the words as you'll say them on the day. Use the same inflections, the same volume, the same tone of voice and then your practise will be time well spent. Before you undertake your practise session, it's essential that you set your goals for the session, after all if you don't know where you're going with the session, how on earth will you ever get there. If you don't have the opportunity prior to the occasion at which you'll stand and speak then spend the drive time in the car practising out loud, that's a great use of driving time.

If you're able to practise at the venue where you'll speak, then this can also create good muscle memory. Imagine that you have to speak at a social gathering and you're able to be at the hotel on the day before the event. You go into the room where the party will be held and the stage has already been erected, the room is empty. With your programme of success and firing your anchor you walk confidently up onto the stage, turn to face the imaginary audience and launch into your practise, the planned opening. You repeat this exercise perhaps three times, and each time you do, you feel more confident, more in control and more certain that when the time comes to speak at the party, you're simply repeating something you've already done three times before. Well, won't that be great! So whenever there is an opportunity to practise at the actual venue you'll be speaking at, then take that opportunity. Whenever I speak from stage at a seminar there is invariably a chance, when the room is being set up by the audio visual people, for me to walk the length of the room, get onto the stage and practise my opening, this is great! I then know that when my time comes to speak, it'll be the second time on that stage.

Now let's talk about visualisation and self fulfilling prophecy. Part of your practise session needs to be that you take a few moments, a few quiet moments and visualise yourself giving your talk or speech. Sit quietly and picture the room in which you'll speak, the audience and then you delivering it for real. See, if appropriate, the audience applaud at the end of your talk and the smiles on their faces, see, hear and feel exactly what will happen and enjoy the feeling. The practise, which you undertake in your mind, is as important as the actual practise you undertake. Many, many experiments have been undertaken with regard to mental practise and it's certainly true that all athletes or at least the majority of athletes these days, undertake mental practise and rehearsal as well as their physical practise of their sport. One of the studies I heard about reported the success of basketball players in a controlled experiment. This is what happened. The players were put into three groups, Group A, Group B and Group C. Each of the groups was tested on their ability to score from the penalty shot position, the marks were recorded. Then the practise sessions were undertaken. Group A was allowed to practise for 1 hour per day, Group B were prevented from practising at all and group C were allowed to practise in their minds for 1 hour per day. The results were surprising; the players met again and were re-evaluated for their ability to score from the penalty shot position, the shot they had been practising or not practising as the case may be. Group A, the group which had physically practised, had improved their ability to score from the penalty shot by an average of 2%, group B, the group who had been prevented from practising now scored on average down by 2% and Group C however, had now improved (remember this was only by mental practise) by 3.5% or in other words a 150% uplift over Group A. Isn't that surprising? The group who had undertaken no physical practise but had only practised in their mind had increased their ability by 150% over the group who had actually practised. How can this be so? Well scientists tell us that our minds can't tell the difference between what we vividly imagine and reality and so it would seem.

These days so many people believe in mental rehearsal or mental programming or mental practise that it must be worthwhile at least trying mental practise yourself to see how you get on. I remember running an in-house training seminar for a client of mine, when I'd been expanding the ideas that we could achieve anything in life if only we'd put our minds to it. Later in the day I'd noticed that one of the delegates, a man, wrote left-handed and commented on the fact. I then went on to say that I'd always considered the idea of learning to write left-handed and somewhat jokingly he said to me,

"Well Peter, if we can achieve anything we set our minds on then perhaps you should set your mind on the idea of writing left-handed, wouldn't that be a good idea?" I took up the challenge and for the next month wrote one page of A4 paper left-handed which naturally improved my ability, however, I also undertook a mental exercise every day for thirty one days, when I visualised myself writing smoothly, quickly and legibly with my left-hand. Now as there was no controlled experiment I'm unable to report to you that the mental practise did make a difference, however, my improvement in the left-handed writing seemed far faster than it would have been if I'd only done the physical practise. So, my suggestion to you is this, that yes, you need to undertake the physical practise but you also need to practise in your mind. George Bernard Shaw said *I became a good speaker as other men became good skaters, by making a fool of myself until I got used to it.*

That's a great expression and yes, sometimes it is just a matter of standing up and doing it until you get used to the feeling, by doing so, you will get used to the feeling and in fact you'll start to look forward to standing and speaking in front of other people and know that it's probably one of the most enjoyable things you can do.

Now let's look at an assessment test or self-assessment test which you can use both for your practise sessions and any following occasion when you have to stand and speak. Here are thirty-six areas you can check before you undertake your practise session. You could ask friends or family or perhaps work colleagues to act as your audience and then perhaps they'll be prepared to help you by filling in this feedback or assessment form. I'd suggest that you use a scale of 1 to 10, scoring 10 if you feel that you were as good as you could be and lower marks if you feel that there are improvements to be made. Here are the thirty-six areas;

- 1) Planning - You know from the order in which you deliver the speech whether or not your planning was up to standard.
- 2) Winding up - Was it obvious to your audience that you were ready? That you really were in the frame of mind to be able to deliver your speech.
- 3) Opening - Did you deliver three openings and did each of them carry out their functions? Namely, opening 1 was to grab the audience's attention, opening 2 was to tell them what you're going to tell them and opening 3 was to give them a benefit and tell them when you would take questions.
- 4) The room layout - Was the room laid out in such a manner that was appropriate to the number of people in the audience and the type of message you were to give?
- 5) The theme - Was it obvious to your audience that you had a theme and did the theme continue throughout the whole of your presentation?
- 6) Clothing and appearance - How did you or your audience rate your clothing? Was it appropriate? And what about your appearance?
- 7) Goals and purpose - Had you written out your goals and your purpose for the speech or presentation? And could the audience tell that you did have a goal and that you did have a purpose for your talk?
- 8) Body Language - How congruent was your body language with your message and how well did you use body language gestures in order to add power to what you were saying? Were there any body language gestures which the audience noticed which they felt would detract or distract from what you were trying to say?
- 9) Facial movements - What was the audience's opinion of your facial movements, in particular when you changed tack? Did you smile before launching into a humorous or light subject and did you look more serious just before introducing a more serious topic?
- 10) Body language of the audience - How aware were you of the various gestures used by the audience and how well did you react to any negative body language you saw? What actions did you take to involve the audience if you spotted any superior, dominant or negative gestures?
- 11) Were you aware of the audience's eye movements?
- 12) Persuasiveness - Did you feel and did the audience feel that the arguments you put forward were persuasive? Did you use colourful language and by colourful I don't mean invective, I mean additional adjectives and adverbs in order to bring your

- presentation to life? Did the audience feel compelled to take the actions you suggested they should take or buy into the ideas you put forward?
- 13) Visual aids - Were the visual aids you used appropriate to the size of the audience or intended size of audience and how well were the visual aids received? Did the audience understand your message? Did you maintain continuity of colour, font size and font style throughout the presentation if you used either overheads or computer graphics? How professional were you at changing the slides or changing the overhead acetate? If you used a flipchart did you stand at the side in order to write and how legible was your writing?
  - 14) Questioning skills - How effective were you with questions? If you decided to use rhetorical questions, did you make it clear to the audience that you did not expect them to answer those questions?
  - 15) Anchoring - Did you use any anchoring techniques and if so, how effective were they? Did you anchor a particular part of the stage where you were standing or sitting to be the positive part? Did you use any anchoring techniques on yourself in order to be able to trigger your positive feelings and your high confidence mode?
  - 16) The use of language - How well did you build rapport with the audience? Did you avoid such words as *literally* and *frankly*? Did you use phonological ambiguity? Did you use the power of metaphor by putting inverted commas around what somebody else had said to you? Did you use any negative imbedded commands? Did you open the files in the audience's mind before giving them information?
  - 17) Delivery - How well did you deliver the whole speech?
  - 18) Voice - How well did you use your voice? Did you change tonality? Did you change speed? Did you vary the volume you used to include a number of pauses and silences to add power to what you said?
  - 19) Audience benefits - Throughout your speech or talk or presentation, did you include a number of audience benefits, in order that people would want to continue to listen to you right the way through to the end?
  - 20) Audience awareness - How aware were you of the audience and its needs? Such things as the temperature of the room or comfort breaks?
  - 21) Audience involvement - Did you involve the audience in your presentation or speech and if so, how effective were you are at that involvement? If you were using friends or colleagues as the audience, how involved did they feel?
  - 22) Lectern use - If you used a lectern did you move to one side so that the audience could see all of your body language or did you hide behind it holding onto it so tight that your knuckles went white?
  - 23) Confidence - How confident were you? By your own definition and by the perception of the audience?
  - 24) Interruptions - How well did you deal with any interruptions? As you become more proficient at speaking and undertake more and more practise sessions with your friends and colleagues, you can set up a situation where you can ask them to be an awkward audience, interrupting you, dropping coffee cups, asking awkward questions, just to see how well you cope with it.
  - 25) Nerves - How calm were you? Did your audience perceive that you were nervous in any way by what you said? How you said what you said or the way in which you moved? How nervous did you feel if at all?



- 26) Creativity - How creative were you with the writing of your speech or the delivery of your speech? Did you use props?
- 27) Closing - How good was your close? Did you move the audience? Did you use the power of the three-ender close?
- 28) Stories and Quotes - Did you include stories or quotations in your talk, if so were they relevant to your message? How well did you deliver them?
- 29) Solving problems - Were there problems to solve and if so, how well did you deal with them?
- 30) Hands-outs - If you used handouts, how well were they received by the audience and if you were getting audience feedback, how easy were they for them to understand?
- 31) Rhythm and pace - Did you use the power of threes throughout your talk and did you maintain the correct smooth rhythm for what you had to say?
- 32) Timing - Did you stick to the time allotted?
- 33) Notes - How effective were your notes, whether they were on 3"x5" cards or on large sheets of paper? Did you use the wide margin method and did you number the pages or cards?
- 34) Calls to action - If you included a call to action for the audience, how well did they respond to it? Did you include a benefit for them? Did you use away motivation?
- 35) The use of silence - How well did you use silence? Remember that it's only the gap in between the words which makes the words make sense and therefore the appropriate use of silence and pauses is extremely important.
- 36) Stories - Did you maximise the impact of the stories which you told by including all the details which would make the story come to life?

Well, that's a fairly comprehensive self-assessment test and it can be used either as self-assessment or for other people to give you scores. There's an old expression which says *It's the people who keep records who are the people who break records*, so every time you take a practise session and use the assessment test, then keep the test results so you can see that you're constantly improving as each day goes by. The idea which I touched on earlier about having an audience to practise with is a great idea, use your family, your friends, your work colleagues and get them to give you honest feedback regarding your style, your delivery, your body language and all the areas we've just discussed. If this is not possible then present to an empty room imagining that there are people there. Here is an additional way to improve your delivery, read out the speeches of other people, do it in different ways, write out the speeches of other people and understand the different styles they use.

One of the great ways to improve, and as a side benefit, memorise any speech or talk you have to give is to record that speech onto audiotape. You'll then be able to listen to this tape, pause it at any moment and complete the assessment test; you'll hear if you use the words like *um* and *er* and *basically* or *like* or *you now*. You'll know whether or not what you say really does have the impact that you meant it to have; and when you have a recording you're happy with then you can use this for constant practise whilst driving, exercising or undertaking other activities. You'll easily spot phrases you know you should avoid or words with which you have difficulty, so they can be changed in order to make it easier for you to say what you have to say. In addition to audiotape if you

have the facilities then recording yourself on videotape is a brilliant practise exercise. Simply set up the camera and imagine that that is the audience. When you watch the playback, you'll see all your body language gestures, your eye movements and you'll know immediately all the things you should keep in and more importantly the things you should definitely take out. An expression I heard years ago on a tape by Tom Hopkins was *Feedback is the breakfast of champions* and doesn't that say it all when we look at practising our skills. When you record your talks onto videotape or audiotape then you'll understand how much material you need to fill a certain amount of time. Here's an additional tip for you, make a note on your speech notes as to the half-way point which of course you'll realise from the recording. Also make a note on your notes as to the five minutes to go mark. As always the main parts that you wish to practise for any presentation, speech or talk are the openings and closings and as you record yourself either on videotape or audiotape make certain that these two areas get more practise than anything else.

Whilst not for one moment am I suggesting that you would undertake practise with a real audience, you can certainly look at any opportunity that may present itself where you're able to *stand and speak up* for yourself as being a real opportunity. Life really does present so many chances to stand and speak, perhaps, some of the following would be relevant for you; a presentation to a client, a current client or perhaps a new client or customer, a presentation to a board of directors or speaking at a parent teacher meeting, holding a team meeting or speaking at a party, a wedding or a funeral, at an interview, at a dinner where you have to thank the visitors for attending, at an awards dinner, at a public meeting, as an after dinner speaker, as the master of ceremonies to introduce a speaker or give a testimonial, to respond to a question at a public meeting or ask a question at a public meeting, perhaps in a training session where you're either the trainer or you ask questions, there are so many different opportunities and as I said in my introduction in a crisis people are always looking for a leader. There are so many different opportunities to stand and speak and when you take these opportunities you'll find that you become more comfortable on each successive occasion, to the point when you'll look forward to expressing your opinion in public regardless of the size of the audience.

So, over this section we've covered practise, making certain that the practise is always done as though it was for real, undertaking a self assessment test or having friends or family or work colleagues helping with assessment, practising in front of a pretend audience, perhaps even empty chairs, recording yourself on audiotape or videotape which will give you immediate feedback on your performance and taking every opportunity to stand and speak. I started this session by saying that the difference between amateurs and professionals is that *amateurs practise until they get it right, professionals practise until they cannot get it wrong*. If you take the time to practise, and if you take the time to really practise then you will perfect your skills.

In this section of the programme I'd like to cover two specific areas, firstly *on the stage* and secondly, the term I have used a number of times throughout the programme so far, which is *anchoring*. It's true isn't it, the things we enjoy doing, we tend to do well and things we don't enjoy doing, perhaps we don't do quite so well? Well, the same is true

about speaking, I'm certain that now you have a greater understanding than before of the various techniques and methods which will enable you to stand up and speak with more confidence, you'll find yourself doing it on many more occasions. If this is the case, and I have every reason to believe that it is, then I'm certain you'll start to enjoy it more and more. Because you enjoy it more, you'll probably want to do it more, so with that in mind I've included for you, this first part of the section, which is called *On the stage*. During this part I'll cover the physical aspects, lighting, sound and vision. Once you've got to grips with these ideas then I know you'll be more comfortable than ever before speaking from stage and you'll find yourself standing there in front of many people on many occasions.

So, let's look at the physical aspects of standing and speaking from a stage. By definition the stage will be higher than the main floor area and therefore there'll be a number of steps up to the stage, take care. I've certainly had the slightly embarrassing experience, as I've mentioned to you before, of tripping up the steps to the stage and I'd hate for you to have that same experience. Remember my previous comment earlier in the programme, that it doesn't look very professional to carry your notes to the stage? It's far better to have arranged that your notes are already on the lectern or table on the stage, so you can start your pre-planned opening without even referring to your notes – nothing in my opinion looks better than the presenter or speaker who is able to speak for the first few moments without any notes whatsoever. If it's possible for you to have a short exercise that people can do, perhaps even networking amongst themselves, chatting away meeting new people and you can launch into this immediately after the opening, then whilst the audience is occupied with that exercise you can retrieve your notes, open them to the appropriate page, scan down to the next item you're going to talk about and be ready for them as soon as they finished the exercise you've asked them to do. If this is not appropriate then make certain that your notes or note cards are open at your opening, so you'll be able to walk to the lectern, glance down at your notes look at the audience and start.

Most stages these days which are used for seminars and company meetings are a series of large blocks bolted together. Take care, sometimes the blocks have gaps in between them and they can be quite dangerous. The gaps should be taped over by those responsible for erecting the stage, so if possible, take time to walk across the stage prior to your presentation or speech to find out where there are any gaps or loose parts which may later present a problem. If a back lit projection is being used for you, then there will be a space behind the screen which is probably mounted on the stage. If you have an occasion to go behind stage, perhaps to talk to the audio visual technician then make certain you don't walk in this space between the projector and the screen as your shadow will be seen on the screen.

Very often these days, a lectern is used or in many presentations I've seen recently, two lecterns are used. Often microphones are built into the lectern and the lectern itself is taped or screwed to the stage. If possible, arrange for the lectern which you will use to be angled at forty-five degrees towards the edge of the stage, in this way you'll not be tempted to remain behind the lectern at all times. The lectern itself can create a barrier between you and the audience and it stops the audience seeing all of your body

language, which as you know is a major part of the impact of your message. On the lectern, you'll need to have a number of things, including a glass of water. Let me make a point for you again here, you'll remember I said that if you feel you're going to need to sip water throughout your presentation then whenever possible pour the water either before you stand to speak or while the audience is occupied doing something else. So, a glass of water on the lectern provided the lectern does not have a sloping board on which you place your notes. If this is the case then you'll need to find a flat surface away from your feet, where you can put the glass. Next, have a small bowl or a small packet of mints, so you're able to freshen your breath before meeting members of the audience following your presentations. Many lecterns these days do have a sloping board on which to place the speaker's notes. Some of them, unfortunately, do not have a raised edge so the notes do not slide on the floor. In this case it's a good idea to carry a bulldog clip which will enable you to clip your notes to the lectern.

Perhaps one of the most unnatural, and in my opinion unprofessional, things I see regarding lectern use is when the speaker or presenter having reached the lectern makes a great ceremony of taking off their watch and putting it on the top of the lectern and table. This should be avoided at all times. I cannot think of another occasion when someone would do this naturally, please I urge you avoid this. Now I understand some people do it because it stops them from looking at their watch when it's on their wrist, which again, is not one of the things that you and I should do when we're presenting. The solution is simple, and the cost is only about £10.00 or \$15.00; buy yourself an electronic battery operated clock which has large digital numerals. If you place this alongside your notes then it's easy to see the time without anyone knowing you're doing it. Isn't this much better than constantly looking at the watch or taking the watch off and placing it on the lectern?

You'll need pens of various types; if you are to use an overhead projector then you'll need pens to write on the acetate sheets or acetate roll and you'll need a pen, which is not a fountain pen because they can leak and spoil your notes. Once you've looked at your notes and your clock, whenever possible move away from the lectern or table and deliver from the middle of the stage, provided that this does not block anyone's view of the screen for any length of time. As the screen will now only be showing a small amount of information and you've allowed time for the audience to read that information before you speak, there'll only be a few occasions when standing in the middle of the stage will present any problem. The reason that most people do not stand in front of the screen is because they've got so much information on it and they haven't allowed time for the audience to read what is on the screen. If you are to use a seat or a stool on stage, then it'll need to be higher than usual; a bar stool is about the right height. Make certain you sit upright, so that you can breathe properly.

Now, let's look at lighting, very often the lighting on stage will be focused only on the lectern area or areas and if you're going to deliver from the middle of the stage, you may find that that area is in darkness. However, there is a simple solution; you'll know when the lights are shining on you, you'll feel that warmth from the lights on your face and obviously your eyes will know the difference. If the lighting is too bright then it can wash out the screen and make it difficult for the audience to read the information on the

screen, and if you expect the audience to take notes then you must ensure that the lighting in the room is sufficient for them to be able to see what they're writing.

Now, let's look at sound. As you know I've suggested to you that wherever possible, it's better to use tie-clip microphones than lectern-mounted or hand-held microphones, and this is simply because you have greater freedom of movement with a tie-clip microphone than one being held to the lectern. If you use a hand-held microphone as many people do, you may find that having to hold the microphone in exactly the same position for some time will firstly, make your arm ache and secondly, make you rather wooden or stiff in your movements. I would suggest that you avoid the use of hand-held microphones, except for use by members of the audience when they wish to ask questions, although even then I'd avoid the use hand-held microphones and prefer to have static microphones situated around the room where your audience members can go and stand to ask their questions or make their points. This works far better because often those at the front of the room will not wait for the hand-held microphones because they think you can hear. Microphones around the room do have one disadvantage and that is that those people who are not confident, people in your audience that is, who are not confident at standing and speaking may not want to go and ask you a question and you may miss something which is extremely interesting or relevant.

Let's look at the use of tie-clip microphones. I've already explained the benefits; you can move around, you can use your hands to add power to the message you're putting over and it definitely looks more natural. There are however, a number of disadvantages. Once you've clipped the microphone to your tie or shirt or blouse and hidden the wire inside it then you'll need to find somewhere to clip the transmitter. Always, yes always, clip the microphone on your belt, trousers or skirt at the back. I've seen many people clip the microphone at the front and suffer the following problem; as they reach the stage and start up the steps, as they lift their leg to place their foot on the first step, the microphone is knocked off the belt and falls to the floor. Now microphones and particularly their transmitters can cost a great deal of money, far better to keep the microphone transmitter at the back, clipped at the back where it will not move. Don't put the microphone transmitter in a shirt or jacket pocket, again, I've seen a presenter, a professional presenter, rushing to the stage and putting the microphone transmitter in his inside jacket pocket. During his presentation he forgot that the microphone was there and took off his jacket. You can imagine what happened! The microphone and the transmitter became detached and flew all over the stage.

Next, you must know how to switch the microphone transmitter on and off; whilst most audio visual technicians will tell you not to worry about this fact and assure you that they'll turn down the volume when you're not speaking, don't rely on this to happen. The worst occasion I heard of this problem was when a speaker, a man, went to use the facilities and the technician had not turned down the volume of his microphone. This did not create the problem you might imagine it created; however, the presenter turned around to another man and said, "They're all brain dead in there, aren't they?" You can imagine how difficult it was for him to return to the stage and continue with his speech! Do not rely on anyone else when they tell you that they'll turn down the volume, make sure you know how to switch your microphone on and off. You have to know how to

do this, because it's necessary to know how to turn it on and off if you have to sneeze or cough. It's far better to turn off the microphone before you sneeze or cough and then turn the microphone back on after it. A sneeze or cough amplified over the loud speaker system is something to be avoided. When you clip the tie-clip microphone on, make certain that it cannot rub against your jacket lapel, as the rustling sound when amplified is also very distracting.

So, standing and speaking from stage can be a great experience providing that you're properly prepared and aware of the things that can go wrong. Let me quickly summarise for you where we've got to in the first part of this section. We've looked at the physical aspect of standing on stage, making certain that the lectern is angled so it does not conceal your body language gestures. We've looked at lighting, making sure we stay in the light, so the audience can see us. We've looked at sound and how to use a tie-clip microphone. Going back to what I said before, the biggest mistake that many presenters make is reading from the screen, this must be avoided, as all you need is a small mirror or another computer terminal that you see in front of you. The more comfortable you are with the various parts of standing and speaking on stage the better you will present, the better you present the more you enjoy it, the more you enjoy it the more you'll want to do it.

Now let's look at the fascinating area of anchoring. I'll start with an explanation of anchoring, then look at self anchors which we've touched on before, previous anchors and creating anchors. Once you understand how to use the power of anchoring for both yourself and the audience and know that you can use it in order to create smooth communication and not manipulation, then you'll have fun using anchoring in every area of your life, let alone when you're standing to speak. Anchoring as I explained in the nerves section, is where the physical action in the widest possible sense of the description is linked to a mental process, e.g. I'm certain that particular smells hold a strong memory for you, it may be that the smell of bread or coffee reminds you of your mother's kitchen, so as soon as you smell that particular smell, your mind is transported back to your younger years. The sound of somebody's name being read out may well remind you of a person with that name and the picture of their face pops on to the screen in your mind. So, as you can see, when the physical actions take place, then they trigger or bring back certain memories. We can use this knowledge to create stunning results for both ourselves and the audience. Let me give you some examples. It's possible to create an anchor between a part of the stage and the audience's reaction; if you always stand in one particular position when you talk about positive things and always stand in a different position when you talk about negative things then by the time you've done that on a number of occasions the audience will know where those positions are. They know that when you stand in the positive place you'll talk about positive matters and when you stand in the negative place you'll talk about negative matters. You can create all sorts of points on stage, the choice is totally yours, however, whatever you do, do not use this idea in order to manipulate the audience. Anchoring techniques should only be used to improve the way the audience understands your message and not manipulate them into taking actions they otherwise wouldn't have taken. I've certainly heard of presenters anchoring parts of the stage and then using

manipulative techniques to get the audience members to buy products and services. This, in my opinion, is not the way to use anchoring.

As you'll see on the video, you can anchor items in space. Let me explain that process now. Imagine me putting both hands out as though I was holding a box, I'm holding them out in front of me towards my right side and as I do so, I say, "There are some products on the market which always seem to work well and we're pleased we bought them." I then move my hands towards my left side saying, "And there are those products which never seem to work, and with which we're disappointed having bought them." Then going back to my original position with my hands held out to my right side I say, "Today I'd like to speak to you about our product range". You can hear what's happening and you'll see it on the video, I've clearly anchored the position on my right hand side to be the position where good products are talked about. I made a statement whilst holding a particular position and hand movement towards my right hand side that good products always work and then I used that same position when I was talking about my product range. Let me give you another example which you can use in one to one conversations. You can do this with a pair of glasses or even a pen; when you speak, wear your glasses and when you listen, take your glasses off. If you do this in conversation three or four times, then you'll find that the other person realises without conscious thought that when you're listening you take your glasses off and when you wish to speak, you put your glasses on. In order to test that they're anchored to this action, simply put your glasses on when they're half-way through a sentence and you'll find that they'll stop speaking, or at least pause for a moment thinking you're going to speak. You can do the same thing with a pen; simply hold the pen when you're speaking and put it down when you're listening. When you've done this three or four times test that the anchor is in place, and when you're friend is half-way through a sentence pick up the pen and be surprised, though perhaps not amazed, when they stop speaking. Isn't it amazing what the human mind is capable of doing?

Anchors can easily be created with voice tones and in effect we do this without even thinking, most of the day. When you're happy you use different voice tones from the tones you would use if you were sad. Naturally, you'll do this when you're speaking to an audience; you'll change the tone you use when speaking about positive things from the tone you'll use when you're speaking about negative things. You change the tone you use when you speak about amusing things from the tone you use when you're speaking about serious things and in the same way that you'd anchor a position on the stage, you can anchor a particular voice tone to a particular feeling in the audience. As I've mentioned to you before, it is possible to pick up the anchors which have been created by a previous speaker. If you wish to do this, then you need to make a connection, that's why it's so important to know which anchors have been created. As we discussed on the section on nerves, you can anchor confident feelings to a physical action, getting into the high confidence, high belief, high power state you create the anchor and then when you need that state again, you simply fire the anchor.

So, let me summarise this fascinating area of anchoring. Be extremely careful to use anchoring in order to improve your message and the way in which your message is understood, not to manipulate other people. Be constantly aware of the anchors you are

creating with the position you use on stage and your hand movements and your voice tones. Watch other presenters and see how they perhaps inadvertently are creating anchors. Test the idea and share it with your friends by having fun, stopping people in mid-sentence by either putting on a pair of glasses or lifting a pen. Once you're comfortable with the use of anchoring techniques, you'll find that you can improve the way in which the audience understands your message. Take the time to understand anchoring, take the time to practise anchoring and take the time to use anchoring on stage and you'll be amazed at the results you'll achieve.

Now that we're well into the programme, it's time to find the method whereby you'll be able to highlight the key skills that you need to improve in order to be constantly better at the art of standing and speaking up on any occasion. Some time ago, I was fortunate to attend a seminar in Los Angeles where I heard the well-known presenter, J. Abraham, talk about the three main questions that could be used to grow any business. Taking this idea of multiplying various factors together to create an outcome, I began to think how I could use the idea to develop a process whereby I could prompt people to understand the additional training they would need in order to achieve *success* by their own definition. This is how the *PEQ* or the *Performance effectiveness quotient* came about.

In many books I'd read and on many tapes I'd listened to, many presenters and authors had made the point that we succeed in life because of what we know, how long it had taken to learn particular skills and how easily we could be replaced. Again, these ideas formed part of my thinking for the creation of the *Performance effectiveness quotient*. I believe that we succeed at the things we set out to succeed in by the multiplying effect of the following factors;

- 1) What we know.
- 2) How well we use what we know.
- 3) How often we use what we know.

Now let me say that again, we succeed by the multiplying effect of three main factors; What we know, how well we use what we know and, perhaps more importantly, how often we use what we know. So, in order to calculate your performance effectiveness quotient on your ability to stand and speak up on any occasion, we need to establish the key skill areas and then undertake the *PEQ* exercise.

Let me go through the idea of the *PEQ*, taking just a small sample of skills for the moment. Let's say that you and I have decided that the basic skills in which we would need to be proficient to achieve any success commercially would be the following; listening skills, questioning skills, attitude skills and the ability to read body language. So, in order to prepare the *PEQ* we'd do the following: let's say that this is my *PEQ*, so to start with I'd look at my personal rating for my knowledge level in the key skill areas. I'd begin with listening and decide on my score out of a maximum of ten points for my knowledge in the area of active listening. Immediately a problem rears its ugly head, how do I correctly establish my score? Do I just take a guess or is there a mathematical way to do it? Well, having carried out the *PEQ* exercise for both myself and hundreds of other people, I can only suggest to you that your best guess is probably the best



answer. However, if I take a few moments and frame up your mind, then perhaps this guess will be slightly better. As one of my main areas of seminar presentation is the topic of active listening, then you can understand that I would have a certain degree of knowledge in this topic, it's certainly an area that fascinates me and I know that it is a key skill of success. If I'd been marking my knowledge level in active listening just 18 months ago, I would have marked six out of ten, then I went on a one-week course which was all about communication skills but particularly listening skills, and at the end of the course I believe that my score had risen from six to seven points out of ten. So, now today if you and I were preparing my PEQ on the four key skills I would put down my mark for knowledge in active listening as seven out of ten, then I would continue to mark my knowledge for the other three skills, questioning skills, attitude skills and the ability to read body language. Let's say my marks were as follows; Questioning skills - 6 out of 10, attitude skills - 8 out of 10 and body language skills - 7 out of 10. Then I would total the knowledge column and divide the answer by four in order to get an average score for my knowledge in the four key skills, so 7 points for active listening, plus 6 for questioning skills, 8 for attitude and 7 for body language.  $7+6+8+7=28$ , then divide it by 4 is an average of 7.

Next, I would move on to the ability column and look at how well I could use the knowledge. Remember the PEQ is the multiplying effect of how much we know (knowledge), how well we use what we know (ability), and how often we use what we know (frequency of use). So, next, I look at my ability column in order to establish how well I use the knowledge in each of the four skill areas, and let's say my marks were as follows; 8 for active listening, 7 for questioning skills, 9 for attitude and 8 for body language, a total of 32, divided by 4 would be an average of 8 marks for ability.

Now I need to look at the frequency of use column and put down my thoughts for how often I use my knowledge and ability in each of the skill areas. Let's say my average mark is 7. Now is the time to prepare my PEQ percentage for these four skills. You'll recall that my average mark in knowledge was 7, my average mark in ability was 8 and the average mark in frequency of use was 7,  $7 \times 8 \times 7=393$ . Now to get my PEQ percentage, it will be necessary to divide this final figure 393 by 10, this is because the maximum mark I could have scored would have been 10 in each of the areas and  $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1000$ , so if I divide the final answer by 10 then I get 39.3% as my PEQ in the four key skill areas. The beauty of this exercise is that I'd now look at various columns and I'd know what action I would need to take; I can look at the knowledge column and realise which areas of knowledge I need to learn more about, I can look at the ability column and know in which areas I need to practise my skills and then I can look at the frequency of use column and know immediately in which areas I need to use my skills on a more regular basis. Isn't that simple?

So, let me reiterate the process of the PEQ for you and then I'll explain the actions that you need to take when you've established the areas where you need further knowledge, further ability or further frequency of use, and the skill areas you'll need to examine in order to calculate your current PEQ on your ability to stand and speak. So, to reiterate, your PEQ is a percentage, calculated by the multiplying effect of your average marks in the three key areas, namely, your knowledge, your ability and your frequency of use. In

order to carry out the PEQ process, you decide on your score out of 10 for knowledge, and then divide the total of that column by the number of skills you're examining; you then put down your score out of 10 for your ability to use that knowledge, total the ability column and divide by the number of skills you're examining; you then put down your score out of 10 for your frequency of use in the key skills areas, total the frequency of use column and divide by the number of skills you're examining. You'll then have your average score for knowledge, your average score for ability and your average score for frequency of use. You multiply these three numbers together and divide by 10 to get your percentage PEQ. Once you've established your PEQ, you then look at the individual scores and decide on the actions that you need to take in order to increase your knowledge, increase your ability and increase your frequency of use.

Let me now give you some ideas as to the actions to take, in order to increase your knowledge. You can do the following; read more books, listen to more tapes and by tapes, *phonological ambiguity*, I mean cassette tapes; talk to people who have knowledge in the subject area, watch people using the skills of the key areas or attend seminars on the key areas. In order to increase your ability to use your knowledge in the key skill areas, you need to practise; I've already been through a number of ideas and methods for practising the skills earlier in this programme for you. In order to increase your frequency of use, it will be necessary for you to keep records, this can simply be done by means of the self-assessment or feedback form I described for you in a previous section. It really is quite simple, albeit, somewhat time consuming, however, if you really wish to be successful both in business and in life, then it is essential that you constantly learn more, that you constantly practise your skills in order to increase your ability and that you constantly and consistently increase your frequency of use in the key skill areas.

You'll realise by now that you can take this PEQ process and apply it in any area of your life, so what are the areas you should examine in order to create your PEQ for your ability to stand and speak up? They are the following. As we go through this list, I'll give you some key thoughts on how to increase your knowledge, increase your ability and increase your frequency of use.

- 1) Confidence – Without doubt the key skill, and yes it is a skill to be able to stand up and speak with authority, is confidence. I've mentioned that expression to you before which says, *Confidence is the application of confidence* and how true that is. In order to be confident, you have to act confident and so, if you find that you're not displaying the level of confidence that you would wish to display then you need to do things which demand that you are confident. If you make an agreement with yourself that each and every day you'll do something which means you have to be confident to do it, you'll find that this ever increasing confidence will rub off into every area of your life.

The greatest display of confidence is standing and speaking in front of other people, however large or small that audience may be. How do you increase your knowledge about confidence? Well and you'd expect me to say this, re-listen to the section about dealing with nerves. Nerves and the way in which they're displayed are the flip side of the coin of confidence. How do you increase your ability in the area of confidence? Well, I've already covered that for you, you simply have to do

things that demand, yes, demand that you are confident. Now, I know that this is very easy to say and perhaps, slightly more difficult to do, but there is no choice, confidence is simply the application of it. How do you increase your frequency of use? Well, here's a simple idea: in the workbook you'll find a form called the self-management form, it's a simple graph where down the left-hand side are listed all the key areas in which you'd like to check your frequency of use. Across the top of the form are listed the numbers 1 to 10 which represent ten days of the week, so at the end of each day you simply go to the form and score your frequency of use in the skill area during that day. You can use a simple tick or cross to say to yourself that you either have or haven't used the skill that day. By the end of a ten-day period, you will have had many opportunities to realise whether or not you're using your skills as often as you might, and you are prompted by those odd crosses to take more action on a more regular basis. This self-management form can be used for any skills that you wish to improve.

- 2) Assertiveness, which is linked so closely to confidence that I'll leave my previous comments to make the point as to the actions you should take.
- 3) Voice control and there are many books, tapes and courses on this subject - if you have the chance to read stories to children then you have the perfect opportunity for practise. Children's stories, which invariably include a number of characters, are perfect for practising voice control skills. Use the self-management form to check your frequency of use.
- 4) Attitude is extremely important - you and I know that the attitude we have at the beginning of any task is one that will determine how easy the task is to perform and the quality of the outcome we achieve from our actions. A negative attitude invariably produces negative results; a positive attitude on the other hand produces positive results. It's amazing how many people these days have such a negative attitude to so many things, and yet with a slight change of attitude towards a more positive approach to life, they could achieve most of the things that they've set their hearts and minds upon. One of the easy ways to increase your knowledge about this key skill of attitude, is to watch people who demonstrate a positive attitude and make notes about the way they walk, the way they talk, the way they act, this is called modelling. Find someone who demonstrates the qualities you wish to demonstrate and then do what they do. In order to increase your frequency of use of attitude, particularly your positive attitude, then simply make a commitment to yourself to be positive. As Zig Ziglar once said *A positive attitude will not help you do anything, however, it will help you do everything better than a negative attitude will, and wasn't he right!*
- 5) Nerves - I've certainly given you a comprehensive list of the symptoms of nerves and an equally comprehensive list of the ways in which you can overcome them. Now is the time to establish your score in knowledge, ability and frequency of use by the application of those ideas. There are numerous books and audio programmes on the subject of speaking in public and while I have used the words, *presenter* and *audience*, through out the programme, you're fully aware that I mean speaking on any occasion. These books and tapes may give you further ideas for overcoming nerves. To increase your ability at overcoming nerves take occasions when you feel you will experience some of the symptoms of nerves and utilise the ideas from our

earlier section together with any further ideas and see the results you achieve. Use the self-management form to check your frequency of use.

- 6) Planning – This is certainly a key area when it comes to standing and speaking and that is why I spent so much time on it for you earlier in the programme. My additional suggestion for you in this area, is that you take the skills you no doubt use in other areas of life when it comes to planning and utilise the same ideas when it comes to planning anything you're going to stand and say.
- 7) Writing – To improve your knowledge about writing you might consider taking a writing course, there are certainly many such courses advertised in the press these days. An additional method is to make a commitment to yourself to write more than you have done previously, perhaps writing to members of your family rather than telephoning them, so you get into the habit of expressing your ideas on paper. Read other speeches, particularly the famous speeches of history and see which parts of the speech move you and how you could utilise the same ideas in your presentations. When I give my seminars on marketing skills I always say to the audience that it's a good idea to read the direct mail they receive. If you wish to improve your ability to write direct mail then must you would read direct mail. If you wish to improve your ability to write speeches then read other people's speeches. Let me make an additional point at this stage, there is a great deal of similarity between direct mail and speaking in public. Now I've already shared with you my thoughts on the process called *Wiscdar*, which is a process for writing direct mail. If you wish to see how other people attempt to persuade others to take action then there is no better source of that knowledge than reading well prepared, well written, well presented direct mail.
- 8) Creativity – later on in the programme I'll give you a number of ideas which will enable you to increase your creative output when you're writing your speeches and presentations.
- 9) Rapport – As we've discussed it's essential that you build rapport with your audience members, as without it they will not believe you. If you've not experienced the power of NLP training then let me recommend it highly to you. Much of the training centres around the idea of building rapport with other people and your further knowledge in this subject will be extremely beneficial to you. In order to increase your ability to use rapport building skills, take the opportunity as often as possible to speak to new people; as the old expression says *A stranger is only a friend we haven't yet met.*
- 10) Memory skills – Certainly good presenters have good memory skills and these skills are useful in a number of different ways. Your ability to recall stories, quotes and anecdotes which can be blended into a speech is extremely useful and when you're given information by the organiser of an event or by audience members during a question, it's ideal if you're able to bring the information immediately back to your conscious mind by the use of good memory skills.
- 11) Listening skills – Now let me give you a great idea to improve your listening skills, it's this. Tape some of the conversations you have, whether that's telephone conversations or face to face conversations, and then replay those tapes again and again and again. Every time you listen you'll learn something new and you'll be amazed at how much you've missed of what the other person said. The unfortunate thing about live conversations is that we only get one chance to hear what's said and

if you take the time to record what other people say to you and then play it back on many occasions, you'll hear all sorts of different things, different nuances and different meanings to the words they've used.

- 12) Body language – And this means both your body language and the ability to read the audience's body language. There are many opportunities for you to improve your knowledge in this area simply by watching other people. The best time to do so is when you're not involved in the conversation which these other people are having and then you can simply be an observer, trying to work out exactly what it is that's happening in the conversation without being able to hear the words. If you were to read more about this subject of body language, then I'd heartily recommend books by Alan Peace and Desmond Morris.
- 13) Anchoring – Well as we've just been through the subject of anchoring I'm certain that you will have now increased your knowledge base. Be aware of how you're anchoring other people with what you say, how you say what you say and with your body language gestures, and be aware of the unintentional anchoring which is taking place in day-to-day conversation. Have you ever had a situation in your life when every time you met a particular person, just the look of their face put you in a particular mood, perhaps you immediately felt angry or happy, this is anchoring taking place. The look on the face was the trigger to your emotions. An NLP course or seminar would certainly be beneficial if you're interested in anchoring and increasing your knowledge about this fascinating subject.
- 14) Opening – As you know the opening of your presentation or speech or talk, regardless of whether it's at a social or commercial event, is critical to how the audience will perceive and believe the rest of what you have to say. You can increase your knowledge by listening actively to other presenters; you can increase your ability in this key area by preparing openings for the various conversations you have during the course of your normal day. Next time you know you're going to meet a friend at a social event, take a few moments and prepare an opening for the conversation you'll have. Next time you're going to have a commercial meeting, do the same thing, take a few moments and write out a planned opening, practise it and then deliver it and see the difference that a planned and practised opening can really have.
- 15) Closing – The same ideas apply to closing as apply to opening. For the next few conversations you'll have whether those conversations are social or commercial, take a few moments and prepare the exact words and phrases you'll use in order to close the conversation. You really will be quite surprised at the effect that these planned closings will have, most people give no thought whatsoever to how they'll close any conversation, you will be so different. Listen carefully to how other people close conversations and pick up on any good ones you hear or any bad ones you hear for that matter, as part of your learning process. Make certain that you use the power of three's, in your closes.
- 16) Persuasiveness – In order to increase your knowledge in the art of persuasiveness listen to persuasive people. What is it about the words they say and the way they say them that makes them so persuasive? Wherever possible, use your knowledge of persuasion to persuade other people to your point of view and find out for yourself which parts of the persuasion process work well and which parts don't work so well.

- 17) Questioning skills – In order to improve your questioning skills I would suggest you either read a good book or listen to a good audio programme on *Selling skills*. Most sales people are taught the art of active listening and how to ask good quality questions. Questions which they would use to ask their customers, in order to get the customer to provide information so that the sales person could build the sale around the customer's needs. The difference between open and closed questions is that the open questions will prompt the person being questioned to give you more information whereas the closed question will prompt a yes or no answer or brief information. Practise asking people good open questions and then take the opportunity to listen actively to the answers.
- 18) Problem solving – A little later in the programme I'll share with you some key ideas on solving the multi-various problems which occur when standing and speaking up. However, many of the problem-solving techniques you probably use today can also be used with the problems associated with speaking.
- 19) Computer skills – No doubt many of your future presentations will be done with the use and assistance of computer graphics and I'd urge you to constantly improve your computer skills, particularly in the area of presentation. There are numerous courses and seminars and books on the subject. To increase your ability you may consider using computer graphics for smaller presentations, so that you have many opportunities to use them.
- 20) Communication skills – Throughout this programme I've discussed with you many, many communication skills. I've usually divided the skills into areas like active listening, questioning skills, opening, closing and the like. As you and I are members of the human race we have innate ability to be able to communicate with other people. The beauty of possessing active listening skills is not only that you hear more clearly and with greater understanding what people said but you get to learn more at the same time. Another expression often used is this *I don't remember the last time I learned anything when I was speaking*. You and I know that actually that isn't true. We learn an awful lot when we're speaking, when we bother to listen to our own voices and watch the impact our message is having on other people.

So there you have twenty of the key skills of standing and speaking with which you can calculate your PEQ. Decide on your score out of ten for each of the skills for knowledge, for ability and for frequency of use, and complete the whole PEQ exercise by the multiplication of the average marks of each of the columns, dividing the total answer by ten in order to establish your percentage. Then look at each of the marks you've given yourself and decide on an action plan which will enable you to increase your knowledge, increase your ability, and increase your frequency of use. Use the self-management form contained within the workbook on a regular basis. I'm absolutely convinced that there is a direct relationship between somebody's PEQ percentage and their earnings, if this so and I have every reason to believe that it is, then the smallest increase in PEQ percentage will have substantial returns for you in a monetary sense. So, while the PEQ exercise has taken me some time to explain and will take you some time to undertake it, it will be time well spent. Most people unfortunately do not take the time to establish how much they know, how well they use what they know and how often they use what they know. I know that you will be different and that you will take the time to go through this exercise knowing full well that it will pay you handsomely

for many, many years to come. In the face of a poor performance most people will blame something or somebody else. Because you are the type of person who is interested in increasing both the number of times you speak and your ability to speak I know that you will look on any speaking opportunity as a way of finding out the good things you did and changing those things that perhaps didn't work quite as you'd hoped. Increase your knowledge, increase your ability and increase your frequency of use and your success at standing and speaking is absolutely guaranteed.

All human beings have the ability to be massively creative, unfortunately so many people reduce this ability by the simple programme they run in their mind. When asked to rate themselves as to their creative ability, their scores indicate that they have little faith in themselves. On every occasion you have to stand and speak it will pay you handsome dividends if you're able to find creative ways in which to put over your message. You'll recall that one of the keys for memory is when things are unusual and the more unusual you make your message without going over the top, the more likely the audience are to remember your presentation and remember the thrust of your message. Over the course of this section of the programme I'll share with you a number of tried and tested and proven ways by which you can be more creative and a number of ways by which you can make your message more memorable. Just imagine knowing that the audience will enjoy your presentation, knowing that they'll be able to recall what you've said and knowing that they'll be more motivated to action than ever before by your ideas!

Here are ten methods for creative thought and creative writing and creative doing. The first idea I'd like to share with you is a very simple one which is a change in attitude. I call this *dare to be different* and by this I simply mean that there are times in life when we must be prepared to step outside the box, step outside our comfort zones. After all, what is the worst that could happen? Perhaps people might laugh at us or perhaps they might laugh at our ideas and maybe that's exactly the response we're looking for. Certainly at a party or wedding most of the speeches contain a degree of humour and the audience will want an enjoyable day and enjoyable speeches from all concerned. I once saw a television programme about a wedding where the best man had certainly dared to be different in his part of the speeches. He said this, *Now that the bride was married she'd like the return of all the keys to her apartment which she'd lent to previous boyfriends*. The best man had arranged for all the men at the wedding to come out to the front and put a key into a large metal bucket. You can imagine the hilarity that this caused, particularly as he then continued by reversing the story and asked all the people at the wedding who had a key to the grooms apartment to similarly deposit their keys in the bucket. The implication of course, was that they'd been girlfriends of the groom. Only one lady came up to the front to give up her key, she was about ninety and obviously a matriarch of the family! It was a brilliant and creative idea which no doubt having been seen by many people will reappear in various guises at various weddings. Whenever we dare to be different, we will shock some people but that's the way that life is, if you're prepared to be different then you'll make a difference.

Method two is to reverse the problem that you may have in your mind, let me give you an example. Let's say that you're to give a short presentation at your company's annual

conference regarding the export opportunities for your product. You're struggling to find an appropriate theme for your twenty-minute talk and decide to use the reverse method of creativity. On paper to start with you'll ask yourself the following question, what are the themes which would be totally inappropriate for my presentation? In the answering of this question you'll find themes which, to start with, you may think are inappropriate but which on closer examination you may decide are appropriate and may lead you to think of other themes. An additional use of the reverse method would be to ask yourself *How can I give the worst presentation in the world?* And then with a smile on your face, write down all the ideas you can think of, such as have all the computer slides upside down, give my presentation from the back of the room and make the audience sit on stage, do the presentation in total darkness, use a microphone standing outside the room so that the audience can't see me but can only hear my voice, give my presentation while hanging from a chandelier and any other crazy idea you can think of. This will really set your mind racing as to the possibilities of being unusual. Every time you come up with a so-called crazy idea then evaluate it because it may not be such a crazy idea after all. If it is crazy then perhaps the reverse of the idea, which is more sane, is one you could use, here's an additional thought on the reverse method. Let's say that your talk on export possibilities was to give people your ideas on how to maximise your sales in foreign countries. You might ask yourself a question on paper along the following lines; *How can we minimise the opportunities for exports to foreign countries?* and then when you have those answers you know that the reverse of them is how you'll maximise exports. One of the easiest ways to force your mind into coming up with creative ideas is to ask yourself how you cannot do things rather than how you can do things, this is one version of the reverse method.

The third way to come up with creative ideas is to take time to day dream. When you allow your mind to wander off it's normal course then it's amazing what strange things it comes up with. I've found and perhaps you might find the same, that when I take time from my normal busy days to just sit and think, my mind plays with information I've picked up during the course of the day and seems to come up with creative solutions for almost anything. Daydreaming is often best carried out in an environment which is different from your normal environment, e.g. walking on the beach, sitting looking at the sea, perhaps out in the countryside just staring at the clouds. Take the time if you're struggling to find creative thoughts for your presentations or speeches to just sit and think. This gives your mind time to sort out all the information you've had from your various experiences and bring them together with connections that you may not have consciously made.

The sleep method – there are so many stories from history about inventors having fallen asleep with a problem in their mind, only to awaken with a solution. One of these which seems to me to be a brilliant example of the process is the development of the needle for sewing machines; the inventor dreamed that he was being chased by Zulu warriors who were throwing spears at him, the difference in the spears was that they had a hole in the pointed end rather than the blunt end and so the idea of a needle where the thread could be inserted towards the point was born. Our minds are amazing and letting them have the time to sort out the information we already know is time well spent, particularly if you're able to sleep at the same time. If you're going to use the



sleep method then there is a process for doing it; before you go to bed at night then write down, yes, it must be written down, the question to which you need an answer, e.g. *In three weeks time I have to give a presentation as to the export opportunities for our new Mark III product. I need a great theme for this presentation, will you please sort out all the possibilities and report back to me when I wake up in the morning.* Now, you've programmed your mind to find the answer you need, immediately upon awakening look at the question you wrote the night before, read out the question again and simply write down any answers that come to mind regardless of how silly or crazy they may seem. You'll have the answer.

Method five is the reading method and here all you have to do and I've mentioned this to you before, is to read speeches delivered by other people. There are many books containing historical speeches and as you read them as I have, I know you'll think of all sorts of different ways in which you can use the ideas you're reading in your own speeches, presentations or talks. So much in the art of standing and speaking closely relates to selling, unfortunately many people are against selling and hate to think of themselves as being in a selling role. Nothing however, could be further from the truth, every human interaction is based on someone selling something to somebody. Every piece of communication is an attempt to persuade someone else to either do or avoid doing something either now or in the future. With this thought therefore firmly in our minds you and I know that one of the best sources of reading when it comes to preparing speeches is either sales documents or some books or tapes on selling skills. Most sales have an opening, a middle and a close of some description so does a speech, talk or presentation. I've mentioned to you the idea about reading direct mail, it contains some fascinating ideas; as you read through the headlines of the direct mail, read them in order to find out what are the key words or phrases which are being used which move you. Is there a certain phraseology which you can adapt to the opening of your speech? Read through the body of the text of the letter and see if there are any parts which make a point particularly strongly and again could be adapted for your presentation. As you approach the end of that direct mail letter, you'll find, certainly in good direct mail that the writer is now trying to get you to take some action. This is probably to get you to respond by filling in an order form of some description. Again the same point applies, is there something about the words or the way in which the words are used which you could adapt and adopt for any presentation or speech which you're to give? Another area of writing expertise is adverts, take the time to read particularly the long adverts in newspapers and magazines, the ones with lots of body copy and certainly those, which appear on a regular basis and therefore obviously work well. These are an ideal source of ideas for speeches and presentations. Radio and TV adverts have to get over their message in a few seconds, by listening carefully to the way in which they do this you can easily learn great ideas both for the opening and closing of your speeches. I've found over life that there are very few absolutely original ideas and that most things are an adaptation of previous ideas and thoughts. It's often been said that *There really are only the same basic truths and that all creativity is simply a combination of the basic ideas known to all people.* Take the time to read and listen to as many sources of information as possible with the constant thought in your mind how can I use this?

Idea six is mind mapping. The idea of mind mapping came from Tony Buzan and I understand that the thought came to him from seeing the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo da Vinci could certainly write with both hands at the same time and is reported to have been able to draw with one hand and write notes alongside the drawing at the same time. Tony's idea of mind mapping is absolutely brilliant and if you've not yet been exposed to this idea or tried mind mapping then I urge you to do so. Mind mapping works as follows; if you're taking notes at a meeting you would start by putting your piece of paper landscape on your desk, this is because your eyes are side by side and not one on top of the other. You would draw using a minimum of three colours, a central image of the meeting, in the centre of the page, the central idea. Then rather like spokes of a wheel you would draw lines coming from the central image and on those lines you would write in capital letters, one word. One word would be on the start of the topic on which you were taking notes, as the topic expands you would add lines to the first line you drew and then on each of these lines add another key word, as the topic changes you would go to another new line which would again start from the central image, in a different direction. You can see that as your mind map grows you're creating a picture which looks in some respects like a series of trees growing from a central image. This is a brilliant way to take notes at a meeting or to take notes from studying a book, a tape or a seminar. The way you use it for creative thought in preparing for a speech is to start with a central image and then add lines and key words on the lines with pictures, arrows, light bulbs and anything else that will be memorable to you. Put down on paper everything you know or can think about, about the subject in hand. I used my maps to prepare this programme, in fact I did twenty-four mind maps, one for each side of each cassette and each of those mind maps was drawn on A2 size paper. You can imagine how many ideas I was able to capture in that amount of paper. As you draw each line in each area of your mind map and write a key word keep to the same colour for the same group of ideas. If you're interested in finding out more information about mind maps then I can highly recommend Tony Buzan's book *Use Your Head*. If you prefer to use a computer for your mind mapping then software is available. As I write this programme, the URL is, [web.mindman.com](http://web.mindman.com).

Method seven is the dictionary method, and this is a well-known creative thought method originated by Edward De Bono, I've used this method on many occasions and it's prompted my mind to come up with the most amazing ideas. This is how you do it. As you're thinking about the speech or talk you are to give, you take the dictionary and open it randomly, you stab your finger randomly onto the page at which you open the dictionary and find the nearest noun and then using that noun as the start of your thought process, you try to create links between the topic and the noun. Let me give you an example, let's say you're to give a speech at a party which is a toast to the person whose birthday it is, perhaps you are struggling for a theme or an idea on which to base your speech. Going to the dictionary you open it, randomly stab your finger and find the nearest noun is the word *fondue*. Now with this in mind you let your mind freely associate. You might start thinking as follows; a fondue is a pot into which different types of meat on skewers are dipped ... , perhaps with that in mind you could think of the person you're going to toast as having had different experiences and how they've put them into their lives. A fondue gets extremely hot and starts to bubble. What is it that makes this person get hot or angry? Some fondues use cheese instead of oil and

this might make you think or ask yourself the question, What it is that makes this person feel cheated off? Now I know that some of these ideas may seem extremely strange but the purpose of creative thought is not necessarily to think that every idea we come up with we'll be able to use, but rather like the mind mapping process, each idea may lead to a fresh idea which can be used. The real challenge when it comes to creative thought is that many people try to edit while they are creating and this is not the way to do it. Creativity is often thought of as a right brain function whereas editing is thought of as a left brain function, therefore these two functions are best left as separate just for this exercise. Whenever you're being creative simply write down everything that comes to mind without thinking *Ooh! That's stupid* or *That wouldn't work*. Just empty your mind onto paper and then you can go back and see if the ideas are any good and select the ones you think will work. So the dictionary method is a brilliant way not to make your mind think from a different point of view.

Method eight is called *six why's deep and five what's high* and works as follows. This method can be used for problem solving as well as creativity. You start off with an idea and ask yourself the question *Why?* six times. For example, you're wondering whether or not to use a computer presentation for your next speech, let's say that the speech is to a small audience of potential clients so, the question is why should I use a computer presentation? One of the answers to this question perhaps might be that it would look more professional, then you ask yourself a second question, why do I want to look more professional? And you might answer because I want to persuade the client to place business with me, and then a third question, why do I want the client to place business with me? And the answer might be because lately we lost a lot of clients and the fourth question, why have we recently lost a number of clients? That the customer services you're providing has not been up to the level it should be, so now you ask the fifth question, why has the customer service not been at the required level? And you might respond to yourself with there's been a problem with motivation in the customer service department. And so the sixth question would be, why has there been a problem with motivation in the customer service department? And your final answer might be we've not taken enough time in the selection process when we've taken on new staff. You can hear how powerful this *six why's deep* process really is. Having been through the process you now go through the thought again, only this time backwards, you start with your last answer and start to use the *what* questions, e.g. What does it mean when we do not have the right selection process for taking on new customer service staff? And you might answer that you take on the wrong people, spend more money on getting rid of the people and replacing them and many other down sides. Then you look at your fifth answer which was that there was a problem with motivation in the customer service department and ask yourself what happens when there's a lack of motivation in the customer service department? And you might answer that customers get bad service, your company loses customers, positive staff are disheartened and the company loses money, you now have the idea. Using *six why's deep and five what's high* is a brilliant process for creative thought and for problem solving.

Of all the ideas for creative thought that have ever come to my mind the next is without doubt the most powerful. I sometimes call it *the yesterdays road philosophy*, and this is how it works. Going forward in time in your mind to the point where you will have

finished your speech or presentation or talk, you imagine very briefly that it did not go as well as you'd wished. You feel the pain of this poor performance, a poor result and again I must emphasise, this is only very briefly as you do not wish to anchor this problem. Then in writing you ask yourself the following question, *If only I'd ... I would have given a better presentation. What are those dots?* Now you and I know that the question starts off with *I, If only I* and not *if only they* or *if only we*. This focuses you on taking personal responsibility for your own results. So the question, *If only I'd ... What are those dots?* And then remember, this must be in writing. You write down everything your mind tells you, this will give you an action plan as to the things you must do in order to create a brilliant presentation. Let me give you an example, for the moment I'll imagine that I'm to give a talk to a group of potential clients in order to re-focus my mind on being the best I can be. I imagine briefly that I've reached the end of my presentation and it didn't go very well, on paper I write down *If only I'd ... I would have given a brilliant presentation. What are those dots?* I'll allow my mind to freely tell me what I might have done better, perhaps it would come up with some of the following ideas; if only I'd practised my opening more so I didn't stumble over it, if only I'd found out more information about the client's needs and wants, if only I'd taken more notice of body language gestures and altered my presentation accordingly. You can see how useful this *if only I'd* process really is, can't you? You can use it not only for creative thought in preparing speeches or presentations but also in establishing the actions you need to take in order to achieve your goals. In the goal setting process you would simply again in your mind go to the point where you wanted to have achieved the goal and imagine briefly, you haven't, you then go through the *if only I'd* process and you'll find the things you've written down will be the basis of an action plan in order to achieve that goal.

This leads us perfectly into creative idea number ten, which uses self-questions. I've often found that when using self-questions, it's far, far better to do them on paper, in writing, rather than as a simple mental process. Your mind can deal with self-questions and come up with great answers, however, with writing them down, you'll probably find that each answer, which of course you can see, may prompt your mind into expanding on the ideas you're thinking about. Such questions as *what do I want as the outcome?* Or *what is the best way I can give benefit to this audience?* Or *what is the one thing that this audience really wants to know?* Again you can hear how powerful self-questions really are. They are the best self-management and creative process you can use, after all, you know yourself better than anyone else in the world knows you and by asking good questions, you'll always come up with good ideas.

So as always, let's summarise where we've got to with creative ideas. We've looked at daring to be different, perhaps even being outrageous at times; we've looked at reversing the problem or idea and seeing how differently this makes us think; we've looked at daydreaming; the sleep method; reading everything and learning from other people; *six why's deep and five what's high*; the dictionary method; *if only I'd* and self-questions. Ten tried and tested and proven ways in order to release creative ideas from your mind. You'll recall that one of the six keys for memory is when things are unusual we remember them. If you use your creative ideas in order to make your presentations slightly unusual then you have a far better chance of retaining the audience's attention,

have them enjoy what you say and have them remember what you say for many, many years to come. These surely are three of the most important reasons why we stand and speak.

As you take even more of more opportunities to stand up and give your opinion, stand up and make presentations or speeches you'll find unfortunately that some of the problems associated with speaking will start to raise their extremely ugly heads. Over the course of this next section, I'd like to share with you some ideas on how to get over twenty-four of the main problems that I've experienced over many years of standing and speaking. Once you're experienced at dealing with problems then you'll become even more confident to stand and speak. Isn't always said that *adversity creates greatness*?

- 1) When previous speakers take too much time and you find that you have insufficient time for your speech in full. You have a choice, one way is obviously to keep your speech at the length you planned and have the whole event overrun, you can check with your organisers, or you may be the organiser, as to whether or not this is acceptable. I've certainly found on many occasions when I was due to speak at a certain time, that it was half an hour or even an hour before I was introduced. As the time was getting close and I realised that my slot could be shortened, I spoke to the organisers and asked what they wanted me to do; I could either shorten my presentation or go on for the planned amount of time. You have the same choice. If in your preparation and planning stage you know that you'll not be the only speaker at the event, whatever that event may be, then give thought to which parts of your presentation or speech you could leave out without losing the main thrust of your message.
- 2) The next problem in timing is under-runs and this is when you may have to speak for longer than you've anticipated. In this case you again have two choices. One is to find out if it is acceptable for you to only speak for the amount of time you've planned to speak for and the other choice is obviously to extend your talk. You can actually do this in a number of ways; one, is to involve the audience in an interactivity using the ideas you discuss with them; two, is to have a question and answer session where one had not been planned; or three, extend the coffee break or lunch break; four, is to break up into groups where the audience can discuss the impact of your message. I would also suggest that you always have in reserve something you can use in order to use up time you'd not anticipated you would have; the shapes exercise, geometric testing that I mentioned to you earlier is brilliant for this opportunity.
- 3) Sound failure - When you're using a microphone and loud speaker, because you're speaking to a large group of people, there may be occasions when the system fails altogether or you may have a problem because somebody else is using the same frequency as the radio microphone that you are using. The best thing to do is to take a short break; so that either the audio technician can solve whatever problem they have or change your microphone for a different frequency. In the event that you do have total sound system failure, then you have a number of choices. One is to shout and another is to divide the audience into small groups and give them activities to

- undertake; or brief a small number of people on your speech notes during an additional coffee break and have those people lead a number of small groups.
- 4) Equipment failure – If you suffer from equipment failure such as a computer breaking down or a projector blowing a bulb then carry on without your visual aids. As I mentioned to you during the section on visual aids, the purpose of them is only to add impact to your message and not replace you, making you simply a technician. Most companies, most hotels and most conference centres will certainly have a flipchart, which you could use as a backup. So often when equipment breaks down, people panic; this is the last thing you need to do. You know that you are properly prepared, you know that you are properly practised and you know that following your great opening, if you've had the chance to do it, the audience is waiting with baited breath to hear the fascinating information you're going to give them. Whatever you do, be calm. If you suffer from equipment failure, it's only a minor problem and it will not stop you being a powerful presenter.
  - 5) Water over your notes – If unfortunately, you spill water over your notes and they're so sodden that you can't read them then you have a real problem. In order to avoid the consequences of this happening carry a spare set.
  - 6) You're mis-introduced – We have discussed introductions and you know that it's essential that you get the information absolutely smack on. If however, the person introducing you has not gone to the same level of planning and practise which you have and mis-introduces you, then be gentle with them; don't make them look stupid, simply correct the mistakes as you give your opening or during the main body of your speech.
  - 7) Depositioning – If the introduction depositions you then deal with it with humour. Remember you do need to state your experience and establish your credibility and if the introduction has depositions you and your credibility then you need to correct the audience's understanding. This is extremely important. Remember my comment *you have to be believed to be heard* and therefore if you continue too far into the main body of your speech without establishing credibility or re-establishing credibility from a poor introduction, then the audience will not be in the right frame of mind to hear what you have to say.
  - 8) You've forgotten your notes – Yes, it can happen, and even forgotten the second set. What to do? Well you have a number of choices. One of course is to wing it. No doubt if you're well prepared, which I'm certain you will be, no doubt if you're well practised which I'm certain you will be, and if the speech or presentation is short then you can probably remember most of it, if not all of it, and with a few moments to jot down the key words, you can certainly deliver a brilliant presentation. Your second choice is to re-write the whole speech – the challenge of course, is that you may not have time to do it. The third option is to keep a back up copy of your speech, albeit out of date, always in your car. The fourth option is to have your speech notes faxed to you and the fifth option is to refuse to speak, which is an option I doubt you'll take.
  - 9) Your computer disk fails to load – Somewhat similar to equipment failure and the real solution here is to have sent the disk to the organisers or to the computer specialist prior to the day of your presentation or speech. If you've not done this and left it to the day to load the disk, the problems may occur. Always check which software is going to be used on the computer which will be linked to the projector.

Always take a spare disk just in case the disk is corrupted and it's not a problem with the machine.

- 10) Your trip up – I know I've mentioned this to you before. I know it shouldn't happen but it does from time to time. The way to deal with it is to ignore it, exaggerate it or use humour to overcome it. The audience realises that you are human and understands that people do sometimes become clumsy when they're under pressure and as we know, standing and speaking can for some people be a pressured situation. You will certainly have seen, as I have seen, politicians tripping up stairs, tripping down stairs and generally falling about, unfortunately for them, these occasions are usually recorded on film and played again and again.
- 11) Hecklers – It's unlikely, unless you get into the political arena, that you'll suffer with hecklers. It can happen at social events but usually its all light-hearted. If unfortunately you do sometimes encounter hecklers and they make comments which are either inappropriate or through what they say the timing is going to be thrown out of sync, then you must deal with them effectively. One way is to totally ignore the heckler and carry on as though nothing has happened, but when I say totally ignore, I mean just that, your body language must remain confident, your voice tones must remain confident, your whole demeanour must remain confident. Another way, although I would not, repeat not, suggest that you take this one, is to refuse to continue until the hecklers have been removed. If you do take this line, you're really saying to the audience that you're unable to deal with interruptions or anyone who happens to hold a different point of view. In a small audience, then you can invite the heckler to come up onto the stage and make their point of view known to the rest of the audience. This is a very powerful approach, as most of the hecklers are very comfortable sitting in the body of the audience shouting out comments, they're far less comfortable standing, as you will be, in the power position in the front of the room. As I mentioned to you when we went through the section on dealing with questions from the audience, be very careful with your position on the stage and your body language. If you should have someone heckle, whatever you do, do not move back into the stage as this will indicate that you're trying to distance yourself from the person and will look like weakness, move towards them and in a small room, right up to them and ask them to make their point directly to you.
- 12) Saying the wrong thing – I've mentioned the expression to you before about being *hung by the tongue* and sometimes when we're enthusiastic and keen to put over our message to the audience, it can be easy to get carried away and simply say the wrong thing. The solution, ignore it if you think that nobody has noticed, although this is probably not the case, perhaps better to apologise, if that's appropriate.
- 13) You forget the handouts – The only problem you'll experience with forgetting the handouts is if anyone in the audience knows that you're supposed to have handouts. If they do, then explain that you don't have them with you and that you'll be sending them at a future date. If they don't know then don't tell them.
- 14) Mis-spellings – Sometimes, despite every effort, a mis-spelling can slip through the editing process and appear on an overhead projector acetate or the computer presentation. If this happens to you and you notice it then you can get around it in a creative way; you can pretend that it was a test for the audience of their ability to spot errors, but be careful, perhaps you should give a prize to someone who spotted it. You can apologise, although, apologising is not usually the best course of action,

you can ignore it or you make light of it by talking about computer spelling programmes or grammar checkers. Whatever you do, do not blame anybody else, even if somebody else prepared your slides or acetates. The audience will expect that you've checked the slides and blaming someone else is avoiding taking responsibility and will destroy your credibility with the audience. I'd strongly suggest that prior to any presentation before an audience, particularly when they're going to be given written information or there is written information on the screen, that you get someone else to spell-check the whole presentation for you. By this I do not mean that you get someone else to run it through a computer spell-checking program, no, I mean get them to read it to make absolutely certain that there are no spelling mistakes. It's extremely easy as I'm sure you are aware for us to mis-read things we've written, we tend to read what we thought we said, rather than what we actually wrote.

- 15) Late arrivals - Sometimes after you've begun your speech or presentation, audience members arrive late in the room. This can be distracting for both you and the audience members. You have a number of choices as to the actions you can take; first, you can totally ignore the fact that people have arrived late and continue with your presentation. Second, you can acknowledge the fact that they've arrived late, without embarrassing them, and providing you've only just started you can go back to the beginning of your presentation and give them a summary of what you've already covered. In certain situations, this would be the best course of action as it may well be that your opening is critical to the rest of the presentation. If at a meeting, when you know all of the audience members and someone turns up late, then you can make fun of this and perhaps add some humorous comments along the lines of, just as they're walking in *Well, that's exactly how to win the lottery, I'm sorry but I can't go over that another time.* That'll usually raise a laugh.
- 16) The previous speaker uses your material - This can happen on quite a regular basis and if you know that there are other speakers at the event where you'll be speaking and that their topic is similar to yours, then it would be as well to check with them prior to the event as to the stories or anecdotes they're aiming to use in their presentation. If you don't have the opportunity to check this out, then ensure that you hear the previous presentations so that you know if some of your material has been used. If you're not able to hear the previous presentations, then check with the organisers or someone else who will have sat through the previous presentations. You'd do this in the coffee break or lunch break prior to your own speech and ask them if the stories you are to use have already been used.
- 17) If you launch into a story and an audience member tells you they've already heard it, then you'll have to think quickly and try and make a different point about the story. This idea applies if the previous speaker has used a story you wish to use and you feel you can't remove the story as it's a central part of your speech. Make certain that you're able to make different points with your different stories.
- 18) You spill something on your clothes - Perhaps there is nothing to be done, you may not have spare clothes with you, can you borrow a shirt? Borrow a tie or a new jacket? Who knows? If you are to speak at an important function or event then it's essential that you do take spare clothes with you.
- 19) Your voice cracks - This can happen to anyone and is one the many reasons why I suggest that you use a microphone and loud speaker system on most occasions. If



you have a cold or sore throat then the use of a microphone will enable to speak in a very quiet voice and still have every member of the audience understand exactly what you've said. If you feel that it is a temporary problem and you just have a tickle in your throat then perhaps you can organise a short break where you can obtain some throat sweets or take a drink in order to lubricate your throat.

- 20) Your lose your train of thought – This can happen when you're answering a question from an audience member if you've decided to take questions throughout your presentation. If it does happen there are a number of solutions. One – you can get the audience involved in a discussion group and by the time they've finished their discussions and reported back to you, you'll have no doubt remembered where you were. Two – you can take a break, a short coffee break or a comfort break but perhaps the best solution is simply to say nothing, look down at your notes, find out exactly where you are and then start again. This use of silence is extremely powerful and the audience won't think it's strange that you've not been speaking for a minute or two. If it's a small meeting when this happens, provided you have good rapport with the audience, ask them where you are!
- 21) Your nerves show – If you're concerned that you might experience the problem of your nerves showing, perhaps a touch of blushing or voice trembling, then either ignore, carry on and get through it or if it's a real problem then take a break and in the break re-compose yourself, undertake your breathing exercises, fire the confidence anchors you've created and if there is time go through all the ideas from my section on handling nerves. Everyone who stands to speak has suffered or still suffers from some form of nerves; it's how you think about it that is important. If you know, as you do know that it's only a temporary thing and that with constant practise and experience at standing and speaking the nerves will disappear, in that sense it won't bother you. You'll overcome the problem.
- 22) An angry listener – This is somewhat similar to the heckler. You may have an audience member who disagrees with what you say and while they don't shout out their comments, they may well turn and talk to their neighbour or neighbours and start to disrupt the event. If this ever happens to you then remain calm, if it's obvious to all concerned that the person disagrees with what you have to say, the you can either re-phrase what you say, giving different examples or stories, or ask the person for their opinion. Your calm voice and willingness to discuss the matter should have them respond in like manner.
- 23) Your forget the name of your host – My memory works very well and yet sometimes in the heat of battle, I have forgotten the host's name. What to do? On stage, ignore it, what other choice is there? If there's a break before you need the name of the host again, simply ask someone else in the audience.
- 24) Getting names wrong – This is a similar problem although you'll only know you've got the name wrong after you've said it. What to do? Use a slight degree of humour and trade off the rapport you've already built with the audience members by making light of the situation without embarrassing the person whose name you got wrong.

So there it is we have twenty-four of the possible problems that can turn up when you stand to speak up for yourself on any occasion and twenty-four solutions. All of these problems have happened in my speaking career and I can assure you that if you use the

ideas I've suggested in order to sort out the problem, you'll be able to move forward in your speech without any further problems. As I said at the start of this section, it's only when you stand to speak that you get the problems associated with standing and speaking. Most people never have the opportunity in life to show their ability, most people never have the opportunity in life to demonstrate their personal power and most people never take the opportunity in life to stand and speak up for themselves. On the other side of this tape I'll give you some information about special occasions, weddings, christenings and the like. On the next tape I'll give you some information about being a professional presenter and share with you some stories, anecdotes and quotes which I'm certain you'll be able to use in your presentations, talks and speeches.

Well here we are at the end of the main part of the programme. Together over the last few hours, we've covered a great deal of information and with your repeated listening over the months and years to come I know that these ideas will make a great deal of difference in your life, the confidence it takes to stand and speak up for ourselves is a confidence which will manifest itself in so many different ways. Parents report that they are now more confident in dealing with their children, business people report that they are more confident in dealing with their customers and staff and many people report to me that in their social dealings, their new-found speaking confidence has made a positive difference.

Just think for a moment of the volume of things we've discussed together. We started out by looking at the benefits of being able to stand and speak up and by so doing you'll be perceived as more powerful, more knowledgeable and more successful. We looked at persuasiveness and the traits of persuasive people, the use of your voice and appropriate humour. We examined the audience and how we could understand them by profiling them, setting goals and understanding the feedback we were given. We looked at audience needs and wants, and how you should be dressed and what a difference clothing made, remembering you never get a second chance to make a first impression. We covered planning a speech or presentation by looking at the results we wanted, undertaking research, deciding on the timing. We looked at visuals, using the carpet fitter's technique and writing an introduction. Then there was a major section on dealing with nerves. We examined the various ways in which nerves manifest themselves, the cause of nerves and then a variety of tried and tested and proven solutions, to enable you to be totally calm, totally confident and totally powerful in any presentation. We looked at logistics, examined room layouts, space, timings and concerns.

In the writing your speech section, we covered goal setting, planning the outcome, deciding on a theme, collecting the stories, reference material, the six keys for memory, writing logistics, using the power of three's and self-questions. You now know that the opening and the closing of your speech or presentation is critical and in the same section we looked at planning the opening, the reason why an opening should be used and the three types of opening. We've covered closing using a three ender close and a call to action and how to get applause, and over various sections I gave you a number of ideas to avoid.

We examined questioning skills and particularly the timing of question and answer, how to ask questions and what to do when somebody asks you a question. Then we examined the use of language, talked about audience continuity, building rapport, imbedded commands, opening the files and phonological ambiguity as well as jargon and words to avoid. Then we examined presenter body language, the first impression that you make with your open body gestures, hand movements, posture and thirty body language movements and examined which you should avoid.

Then we looked at reading the audience and twenty-six ideas from which you'd be able to know almost what the audience was thinking. We examined eye movements and particularly the upper eyelids and lower eyelids, legs, evaluation gestures and decision making signals.

In the visual aid section we looked at keeping things simple, using a flipchart, using an overhead projector and using a computer. I gave you many ideas on the advantages and disadvantages of these three options.

In the doing it section, we covered attitude and style, a checklist of self-questions, dealing with the audience and getting an early *yes*, using the right language and what to do with interruptions. I gave you ideas on voice delivery and enunciation's and what to do on social events. I covered having a firm and congruent point of view of life with voice, volume and breathing.

In the winding up section we talked about positive internal messages and the actor, and added to that, a practise section where you'll be able to use audiotape or videotape to record yourself. I gave you a self-assessment form which can be used by your friends and colleagues in order to rate your performance.

After that, we looked at being on stage and talked about various physical matters such as pouring water prior to a speech, sound, light and vision and then moved on to the fascinating area of anchoring.

In the opening section, I gave you some explanation of how anchoring works, picking up the positive anchors which had been created by previous speakers, using self-created anchors and then how to anchor the audience without manipulation.

We then looked at the PEQ, the performance effectiveness quotient and I explained to you the combined effect of knowledge, ability and frequency of use and gave you a number of ideas on how you could establish your marks to know precisely where you need to take further action.

In creativity I covered ten different ideas to enable you to be more creative in all your presentations, speeches and writings and later you'll hear about special occasions, fun raising, introducing somebody, christenings, funerals, weddings, toasts and giving a vote of thanks.

In the problem solving area I gave you twenty-four problem areas and the solutions from my own experience.

So, there you have a brief summary of the information in the programme, it will take many, many listening of the programme, it will take many, many watchings of the video and it will take many, many practise sessions in order to move this information into your long term memory where you're able to use it without even thinking about it. Take each idea, try it for yourself and if it fits with your style and personality, use it until you become totally confident and comfortable with it, use the ideas on the final side of the programme, the stories and quotes and anecdotes in order to enliven your speech. Practise until you simply cannot get it wrong.

Although I am now going to use a three-ender close and have used a number of three's throughout the course of this programme, for this one - perhaps for this one more than any other, I'd like to let you know how I think about standing and speaking. The ability to stand and speak is one which everyone is born with, small children have no challenge in demonstrating their confidence in a variety of ways. I certainly believe that each and every person should be taught at school how to master this necessary art, those who weren't taught at school should be taught by their businesses to stand and speak on every occasion. Their personal growth will be surprising, both to their families and to their companies. It has been a great pleasure to take the time to prepare this information for you, it has been a great pleasure to record the information for you and I know it'll be a great pleasure for you to use the information and thereby make yourself more successful. From me, Peter Thomson, until we speak again, goodbye!

Perhaps the occasion when most people have to stand up and speak is most often, a special occasion, therefore, over this next section I'd like to share with you some key ideas and thoughts about eight occasions and how to deal with them. When you've been through these ideas and when you use them, you'll find the occasions on which you're called to stand and speak will be occasions you'll look forward to, knowing that you have the right process to be able to write yourself a toast or a speech, maintain the right protocol and deliver your message with power, with presence and with purpose. The eight areas are the following: introducing somebody; giving a vote of thanks; fund-raising; funerals; toasting; weddings; christenings and business meetings. When I've given you some ideas in each of these areas, I'll also give you some ideas on the questions you can ask someone if you have to propose a toast to them or mention them during your speech. So, let's look at these areas:

- 1) Introducing someone - The first thing you need to be aware of is that you must focus on them and not on you. If you are to introduce someone or be the Master of Ceremonies, you are simply there to open the audience's mind in order that the speaker and their message will be better received and better understood. It may be that on some occasions you're acting as the link between two speakers, take all the focus off you and put all the focus on the speaker. You'll have seen as I've seen over the years, chat shows, where in the early days, the chat show host had his total focus on the guest and the information the guest was prepared to divulge. As the presenter became more famous, so the focus moved, very often from the guest to

themselves. This is not what you're trying to do when you're introducing someone. Here is a simple four stage process which you can follow when you introduce someone, *who, why, what, welcome*, these four *W* questions are the questions uppermost in the audience's mind prior to the speaker beginning their speech. In other words, who is this person? Why did the organiser pick this person to speak to us? What are they going to talk about? So, those are the questions you need to ask in your presentation preparation and give the answers in the introduction. Tell the audience who the person is, tell the audience why that person has been selected to speak - and in this part you'll establish the credibility of the speaker and give their background and their experience - and then tell the audience what the speaker will be talking about without giving too much away. Then welcome the speaker wherever possible using a three-ender close. Let me give you an example, about two years ago I had the pleasure to introduce Sir John Harvey Jones at a seminar, my ending was,

- 2) "So, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a great British business man, a great British leader and the man who does his best to put the great back in Great Britain, Sir John Harvey Jones". As you know the three-ender close will always prompt applause, so there you have it, a very simple four-stage process to introduce a speaker. Tell the audience who they are, tell the audience why they're there, tell the audience briefly what they'll talk about and then welcome them using a three-ender close.
- 3) Giving a vote of thanks - Whenever you're going to pay a compliment to someone then it's essential that you compliment the actions they've taken and not the person themselves. If you compliment the actions then it will be acceptable, if you compliment the person themselves then it'll probably sound like false praise or flattery. Here's another simple process for you to use, tell the audience why the person is being thanked and what impact the person has had on you or the economy, society or the company. Then tell the audience why you were selected to give the vote of thanks using the *kiss* process, *keep it short and simple*, make absolutely certain you're sincere. By all means use humour and focus on them. When you undertake your research about the person or the people that you have to thank, then look for the unusual or unknown facts that others may be unaware of. Make certain that if any clapping or applause is to happen following what you say, then lead the applause.
- 4) Fund-raising or charity appeals - One of the best ways to increase the amount of money that people give at a fund-raising or charity appeal is to tell emotional stories. If these emotional stories can be from your own personal experience then so much the better, if not, the charity concerned will probably have stories which you can use. Naturally, you'll not go over the top with this, but it is necessary to pluck the heartstrings in order to make people give more. In these days of graphic television news and telethons, people have become somewhat hardened to the plight of others, it doesn't mean that people no longer care, it's just that there are so many calls on their money and that they're quite used to charity appeals. When you come to the part of your appeal when you need to ask for the money, then ask for money. Tell the audience what the money will be spent on and say how much you want. Be blunt and brief. So to summarise, use emotional stories, explain to the

audience how the money will be spent, ask for what you want, be blunt, be brief, and be seated.

- 5) Funerals – If you have to speak at a funeral and talk about the deceased person then, as I've stated on many occasions, keep it short, simple and to the point. The three-stage process is to empathise, remember the good times and look to the future. Use appropriate language and by this I mean language which is appropriate to the deceased. If the deceased was a humorous person then a degree of appropriate humour will be acceptable, have the appropriate demeanour.
- 6) Toasts – You may be called on to say grace before a meal. On this occasion it is far better if you don't know the audience to avoid any religious connections. The following expression will probably be appropriate for most occasions *For what we are about to receive may we be always thankful and be mindful of the needs of others.* With a toast be sincere in your comments about the person you're toasting. You can use the six-stage process I'll cover again for you in a moment when I talk about commercial presentations. When giving a toast be sure that you have the titles of the guests absolutely right, nothing can be more embarrassing than mentioning somebody's title wrongly. Perhaps the mistake I see so often with toasts is that not everybody's glasses are filled with the appropriate liquid prior to the toast and therefore when it comes to raise glasses to repeat the toast and take a drink, many people are unable to fulfil the third stage. If you're responding to a toast then mention other people in the room before you mention the person who toasted you, and if you're able to shake hands with the person who toasted you prior to your response then this will be well received. As with all speeches and presentations wait for silence in the room before you speak.
- 7) Weddings – Perhaps the occasion when many people have the first opportunity to stand and speak. There are a number of things to avoid when it comes to giving wedding toasts or speeches, bad taste, family disputes, previous partners, innuendo or suggestive comments. Unfortunately, very often the best man feels that bad taste jokes are part of his brief, but nothing could be further from the truth. The first toast at a wedding is given by the bride's father and is a toast to the bride. There is a very simple five-stage process to follow for the bride's toast. The bride's father or whoever is to give this toast should say that they are delighted or pleased that the bride has got married, they should compliment the bride on her looks and say how lucky the groom is, they should also add some wise words from their experience, perhaps giving the bride and groom some tips for a happy marriage and then propose the toast.

The second toast these days will usually be given by the groom and this will be a toast to the bridesmaids. Here are nine areas which can be included; there will be the opportunity for the groom to start to be able to use the expression *my wife and I* and this is usually a good start. Secondly the groom will compliment the bride on her appearance and on her good choice of picking him as her husband, next the groom will thank the best man for all his help or otherwise on the stag night if there was one, his help on the morning of the wedding and during the wedding ceremony. Next, it's usual for the groom to thank the bride's family for allowing her to marry him and at this point to tell stories about the bride and the family and himself, then the groom will thank the bridesmaids for agreeing to undertake their tasks, compliment them on how good they look and propose the toast.

Next, comes the best man and the best man's job is to thank the groom for the toast to the bridesmaids on behalf of the bridesmaids, he'll go on to say that the groom in thinking the bridesmaids were good looking because ... and then adds some humorous comments. Next, and this is the main part of the speech, he'll talk about the groom, perhaps sharing anecdotes and stories from his relationship with the groom over many years and wherever possible giving out information about the groom which may be unknown to most of the family members and guests who are at the wedding. This is the time when his role as short-term comedian comes to the fore. Next, the best man will read out the cards which have been sent by those who are unable to attend. Very often, the best man can avoid reading cards from those who are present unless there are particular comments which the bride and groom feel they would like shared and, as in any speech, the best man must have a brilliant ending. Providing the proper planning and rehearsal of the speeches takes place then the toasts given by the bride's father, the groom and the best man can be some of the most memorable moments of the whole wedding day.

- 8) Christenings - If it falls to you to make a speech at a christening then the following should be included; a welcome of the child into the family, thanks to the god-parents and the organisers, congratulations to the parents and then the toast. Very simple.
- 9) Business presentations - In business presentations as I've mentioned a number of times, you can use the six-stage process; where are we now? How did we get here? Where are we going? Why do we want to go there? What are the possible obstacles? And what action are we going to take? This six-stage process can be used for business presentations as well as many social occasions.

Now, let's look at research and here are a series of questions, which you can ask of someone you're going to introduce or someone to whom you're going to give a toast. You can ask them about their job, you can ask them about their personal history, any sport they may be involved in, and the following will give you a real insight into the person.

- 1) What is your favourite book?
- 2) What is your favourite TV programme?
- 3) What is your favourite radio programme?
- 4) Who is your favourite sports person?
- 5) What is your favourite food?
- 6) What is your favourite piece of music?
- 7) Who is your favourite team? ( and this might not be a sporting team)
- 8) What is the greatest lesson in life you ever learned?
- 9) What is the greatest failure of your life?
- 10) What have been the best results you've had so far in your life?
- 11) What things please you?
- 12) What things annoy you?

You can imagine that the answers to these questions would give you a real insight into somebody's character, their history and their thinking and then the answers will enable you to build a presentation to them, a vote of thanks to them or even a toast to them.

So, over this short section we've covered making an introduction to someone, giving a vote of thanks, raising money through a charity appeal or fund-raising, giving toasts, weddings, funerals, christening speeches and business presentations together with some great research questions. Social events give us many opportunities to stand and speak, social events are great practise grounds for presentations and social events have the most forgiving audiences. Take every opportunity to stand and speak at social events and use these occasions to hone your speaking skills.

Now I'd like to move on to something totally different and that is professional speaking. It may be that now that you've listened to the whole of this programme and with your previous experience of speaking and with your future experience in using many of the ideas from this programme, you may decide that a full-time career or part-time career in the speaking arena, the professional speaking arena, is one which you would enjoy. If anyone had suggested to me many years ago that I would eventually become a professional presenter, then it's highly unlikely I would have believed him or her and yet, here I am, years later, thoroughly enjoying a new career of being a professional presenter.

Just think, one of the things you do each and every day of your life is probably to speak to other people. Wouldn't it be great if you could still do that and be paid for it? Most people, in fact everybody has an opinion about most things and if you have a specialised area on which you have a solid knowledge base and you know that many people would benefit by being exposed to that knowledge, then perhaps you would consider spending some of your time giving speeches and presentations and have the pleasure of not only the applause but payment as well. Over the course of this section I'd like to share with you a number of key thoughts. If the idea of being a professional presenter appeals to you we'll look at the benefits, giving free seminars, the fees for speaking, publishing, some thoughts on visual aids and brochures. If you do decide to take this path then I can assure you that it will be financially rewarding, emotionally rewarding and personally rewarding. If you have the slightest thought that this could be something you'd wish to do, then, perhaps you could start off by offering free seminars or offering to speak at breakfast meetings, and do it, totally free of charge. There are many speakers' clubs about, which would give you the opportunity to practise your material and your presentation and your delivery style. If you're involved in business in any way, then grab every opportunity to stand and speak and express your opinion. As a presenter, you will need to have a firm opinion and not be swayed by every whim or word of the audience. If the idea of giving a free seminar doesn't appeal and I can certainly confirm from my own experience that when the ticket price is zero, people tend to make an excuse not to be there, then you can use an idea I picked up some years ago. Have a printed price on the tickets and then have the word *complimentary* stamped across them, this way you give value or a perception of value for the seminar or talk you're going to give and yet people will not have to pay to hear you speak, at least in the early days.

The marvellous thing about standing and speaking or in other words being a speaker or presenter is that people will look to you as being a person who has confidence. Most people would love to have the confidence to stand and speak in public and yet they



never take the time, effort or energy to learn how to it, and then take the bull by the horns and actually stand and do it. Once you are a well-known presenter, even if that is only well-known in your circle of friends or business associates, then you'll be surprised at how many times people will ask you to be the presenter of their ideas. Let me give you some thoughts on how much you should charge for your presentations. If the majority of your speeches are to business audiences then your fee will probably be higher than if you only speak at social events such as after dinner speaking. As most countries suffer to some degree from inflation, it's perhaps best that I don't give you any exact prices at this point. Suffice to say that whatever you think is high will probably not be so. The golden rule, or in fact, the golden word of marketing is *test*, you never know what price is acceptable to the market place unless you test the price. Let me share a thought with you now regarding an exercise, which I do on my open seminars when it comes to the discussion of price. I start by saying to the audience, "You can imagine ... you remember that this is far better than *Can you imagine?* ... that I'm holding a tea tray." I put out my hands exactly as though I'm holding the tray, then I continue,

"Imagine that this tea tray is for sale in a well-known store. What I'd like you to do is to write down, not shout out, simply write down how much you would be prepared to pay for this tray or what price you think this tray would be for sale in that store". Once everyone has written down their thoughts as to the price, I then find out what the answers are. I would say the following,

"Who thinks that the tray would be priced at about £5.00?" (Naturally I would use \$5.00 if I was in the States). A few people would put up their hands, then I continue with, "Who thinks about £10.00?" A few more people would put up their hands and so I continue moving up in ten pound amounts or ten dollar amounts until I reach the top figure which an audience member believes would be the price. To give you some idea on this, the lowest price I've ever had stated was £2.00 and the highest price I've ever had stated was £200.00. Then I make the point to the audience,

"Isn't it amazing that even though we're all looking or pretending to look at the same object, how different our views are with regard to price?" This is exactly the same in today's market place, there will be a sector of the market place which will think the price of your product or service at say £10.00 is far too cheap, still at this price there will be a sector of the marketplace which thinks that the price is too high.

"In this room alone", I continue, "you can see the wide variety of the perception of price". So, the point of this whole exercise for the audience and the point of me mentioning it to you now is so that you are prepared to test your fees in the marketplace. I've often found, and I'm sure that you'll agree, that when we pay the right price, we are pleased with our purchase. If we pay too little for something then we don't value it as highly. There are a number of ways in which you can test your price, you can use direct mail, direct sale, the internet, referrals or you can go to a speakers' bureau and have them market your speaking services.

One way you can easily break into the professional speaking marketplace is to start by offering seminars to your business contacts. You might suggest to them that you'd be prepared to undertake seminars or training courses for them at no fee, albeit, you'd decided and told them how much per day you want to be paid. You explain to them that your fee for running the seminar or presentation would be five referrals into

contacts who were of a similar standing and, naturally, this would be based on the success of your presentation or speech. Associations are often looking for speakers for events, things like local business clubs, breakfast clubs, chambers of commerce and the like. It would be also possible to advertise a seminar at a minimum price and look to capitalise on the opportunities you've created for yourself by the seminar by contacting those who attended following a successful presentation. If you decide to be a professional speaker then I would suggest most strongly that you publish your material in a variety of ways. Firstly, you should record every speech or presentation you give, this provides you with a perfect product, which can be sold. If you add a workbook to this live recording at one of your presentations then you would create a substantial product, which would have a very reasonable price. Next, you need to produce a booklet or in fact, if you have sufficient material, a book, even if this is self-published. Booklets and pamphlets are certainly a great starting point and the reason you need a product, whether it's a paper-based product or an audio-based product or a video-based product is because many of those who see you speak will want to have more information from you regarding your specialised subject. In many commercial presentations it is acceptable to have a back of the room table where your products are sold. It's also acceptable, if you're running the seminar yourself to promote the back of the room table and your product sales. Those who engage you to speak may not wish you to have a product table, check with the organiser of the event. Once you are a published author, particularly with a book, then your fee rate will rise almost automatically. Published authors are invariably paid more than non-published authors, this is why it's so important to record every speech and every presentation you give because you'll use these recordings as the basis of the book as well as selling them in their own right.

When you're standing and speaking, despite the fact that you're probably working from a script, you will no doubt come up with great ideas on the hoof and if you're not recording the presentation then often these ideas can be lost forever. If you decide that you want a book published by a well-known publisher, then my suggestion to you would be to have finished the book or have it in such a form that you can show it to them, for in this way, they are far more likely to be prepared to discuss publishing. Whichever road you take with regard to publishing and I urge you to publish, being a published author instantly, as I've said, increases your fee rate and equally instantly increases your credibility. When you record your live seminars or presentations or speeches, if you're using any visual aids then make certain that you either explain the visual aid so clearly that someone who is subsequently listening to the tape would know what you're talking about or following the seminar you record separately an explanation of the visual aids which can be edited in to the master tape prior to the duplication of your new audio product. Very often I've listened to recordings of live seminars and the presenters have missed this point, they've not explained the visual aids and without a workbook or additional notes of some description, some of the key points they're making from the visual aids were extremely difficult to understand, if not impossible. As a professional presenter it will be necessary for you to have all types of visual aids prepared, you'll need to either be confident of computer presentations or have contacts who can prepare them for you. You'll need to have workbooks, overhead projector acetates of your main topics and be prepared to give presentations using a

flipchart. As you increase the number of engagements you undertake and as your wish to increase them rises then it would be necessary for you to have a brochure on yourself. Many brochures are produced which try to tell too much of the story. Keep your brochure simple, make sure that there is a photograph of you and it is worthwhile using the services of a professional photographer to take this photo, and clearly state in the brochure the main topic areas upon which you can speak. Don't try to be a jack of all trades and master of none, pick a specialised subject, which is something you have a passion for and on which you can deliver a great presentation. Your brochure should also include testimonials from satisfied clients and if you decide to have a brochure at the start of your speaking career then these testimonials can be added in as separate sheets later. On the brochure state the titles of any speeches or presentations that you give, appraisal of the subject matter and full contact details. Make certain that you have an E-mail address as well as the usual telephone and fax numbers. As a professional presenter, you'll need to start a research library of your own, in which you build massive amounts of information on your specialised subjects, you'll need stories, quotes, anecdotes and personal experiences as well as the main books and audio programmes on the subject. It's also essential that you have a *USP*, that's a *Unique selling proposition*, or strap line which you can add underneath your name every time it appears. Similarly, it's essential that every time your photo is shown either on a book or your brochure that the photo is labelled with both your name and your USP or strap line. Being a professional presenter can be hard work and involve you in a great deal of travel, however, the rewards can also be extremely high. As a professional presenter myself, I would highly recommend this career. You get to meet many interesting people, you get to talk to many interesting people and you get to make a substantial income. If you decide to move into this area then I wish you every success.

On this side of the programme I'd like to share with you some stories, some anecdotes and some thoughts that will enable you to enliven any presentation or speech or talk that you are to give. I'm going to deliver them to you as though I was delivering to an audience. So, here we go!

- 1) The bird in hand – Many, many years ago there lived a wise man in a village and the wise man could answer any question that anybody put to him. A group of the local village lads thought they would try and catch the wise man out and so one of them came up with an idea and said to his friends, "What I'm going to do, is to go up to the wise man, holding a sparrow in my hands. I'll say to the wise man what have I got in my hands and he'll know the answer because he knows the answer to everything and he'll say it's a sparrow. I'll then say to him is it alive or is it dead? If he says it's alive, I'm going to crush it in my hands and he'll be wrong and if he says it's dead, I'll open my hands and let it go and similarly prove that he's wrong." So the lad and his mates went up to see the wise man. "Wise man" they said, "You can answer any question in the world can't you?" "Yes, my son" he replied. "Well can you tell me what's in my hands?" The wise man said, "It's a sparrow, my son". The lad looked around at his mates, smiling and said, "Wise man, can you tell me if the sparrow is alive or dead?" The wise man said, "I cannot answer that question, my son", and the boy responded,

“But surely you can answer any question”. The wise man said,  
“But I cannot answer that question”, but the boy persisted and said,  
“Wise man, you always said that you could answer anything”.  
“In that case my son, I will give you an answer, the answer is in your own hands”.

Now that story can be used with the right audience, with the following lines, *And of course today, we've covered a number of key ideas but now action is the key and that answer lies in your hands*, and then you'd move on to use your three-ender close.

- 2) Here's a great story you can personalise if you're talking to a sales force – Once upon a time there was a salesman who won a competition. The prize for winning the competition for having the highest sales was a trip to Scotland, a shooting trip. He was taken by chauffeur driven car to the airport, a plane flew him to Scotland, he was met by a chauffeur-driven car and driven to the loch where he met the gamekeeper. The gamekeeper there said to him,  
“Sir, have you ever been shooting before?” and the salesman replied,  
“No, I haven't”. So equipped with his green wellingtons, his Barbour jacket and a gun, the salesman was extremely pleased with his outfit and said  
“Do I need anything else?” The gamekeeper said,  
“Yes, you need one more thing”.  
“What do I need?” said the salesman.  
“Well you need a dog”.  
“That's great, I like dogs”, so the dog came along and the salesman said,  
“What's the dog's name?” But the gamekeeper replied,  
“His name is Salesman”.  
“Well that's a strange name for a dog isn't it?” The gamekeeper said,  
“Yes, we call him Salesman because he's out there every day doing the business”. Obviously our live sales man was very pleased with this description, anyway he had a great day and flew home very satisfied. The following year the company concerned, not thinking that the same person would win the competition had arranged the same prize, but as always happens in these stories, the same salesman won. He was taken by chauffeur-driven car and plane and car again to the same loch, where he met the same gamekeeper who was pleased to him again. He gave him the green wellies, he gave him the Barbour jacket and he gave him the gun and the salesman said,  
“Can I have that same dog?” The gamekeeper said,  
“Um, yes, you can sir”. The salesman said,  
“I notice from your tone of voice that there's something different about this dog, can you tell me what it is?” The game keeper said  
“Well, we've changed his name”,  
“You've changed his name! Well, what do you call him these days?” Now this is the point where you can actually personalise this joke, if there is a sales manager or a sales director in the room and their surname is sufficiently unusual, then you use their surname instead of the title, but this is how the story goes. The game keeper said,  
“Well now we call him sales manager”,  
“Well”, said the salesman “What's different now that you call him sales manager?”

The gamekeeper replied

“Well, sir, now that we call him sales manager he just sits on his backside and barks all day”.

- 3) You may well know of a famous story called *Acres of Diamonds*. Many people have told this over the years and the basis of the story is this – That years ago in Africa, a man owned a farm but he was introduced to the idea of diamonds and became so fascinated by the idea that he sold his farm and went off to search for diamonds. He searched the whole of the African continent but unfortunately didn't find any and in desperation, took his own life. Then back at his farm, a local priest was coming along and noticed on the mantelpiece a large stone that the new owner had found in a stream on the farm and he said,  
“Ah! The owner has returned”. The new owner said,  
“No, he hasn't, we've heard nothing of him”.  
“But there is a diamond, obviously he's found them”. The new owner didn't realise that what he'd put on his mantelpiece, which he just thought was a large attractive stone, was in fact a diamond and turned out to be one of the largest diamonds that was found in the whole of the African continent and when the farm was searched it was found that it was one of the major diamond producing areas. The point of the story is that so often people go off and look for pastures new when in fact, they're standing in their own acres of diamonds. There's an expression, which also goes with this, which you can often use, which is this *The grass isn't greener on the other side, the grass is greener where it's watered* or in other words where we bother to take action.
- 4) I mentioned to you during the tape that I would share a story with you called: Once upon a time there were two frogs, it goes like this – Once upon a time there were two frogs who were hopping about in a farmer's yard when they spied a bucket full of milk. They went over to the bucket, jumped in and drank all the milk and fell to the bottom of the bucket, bloated but happy. Suddenly a crowd of frogs came around jumping and hopping saying,  
“You'd better get out of there because the farmer's coming, he'll get you”. So the frogs started to try and jump out of the bucket, but unfortunately they were so full of milk that they couldn't do it and the crowd of frogs around them got somewhat negative saying,  
“ You can't do it, you won't succeed, the farmer's going to get you”, but still they kept on trying until unfortunately one of the frogs gave up and fell down to the bottom of the bucket, defeated. The other frog kept on jumping but still the crowd of frogs around him said  
“You can't do it, you won't succeed, the farmer's going to get you”, but he finally jumped right out of the bucket and got away. Of course, the question is, how did he manage to do it with all of the frogs telling him that he couldn't do it? I'll tell you. He was deaf, he thought they were cheering, and isn't that often the way? So often when we try and achieve things, people around us are telling us we can't succeed. All we need to do is be deaf frog and imagine they're cheering us on.
- 5) Here's a story that was told to me by a church warden many years ago, it goes as follows – Once upon a time in a village there was a man called Fred. One day it began to rain and it rained so heavily that the village started to flood. Now Fred was a reasonably religious person and decided to pray to his God to save him, but

nothing happened and the village really did flood and the local fire brigade came round in a small dingy and rowed up to Fred's house and shouted to him, "Fred, come and get into the dingy and we'll save you". Fred said, "No, I'm praying to God, he'll save me. I've started so I'll finish". Well anyway, the rain kept coming down and the water kept coming up until finally Fred had to move in to the next floor of his house, by which time, the water was so deep that a lifeboat came along with a loud hailer and called over to Fred and said "Fred, we'll save you, come and get in the life boat". Fred said, "No, I've started so I'll finish. I'm praying to God, he'll save me". So Fred kept on praying but the rain kept coming down and the water kept going up until finally Fred, was sitting across the top of his house. A helicopter came along and lowered down a rope to Fred and said, "Fred, grab the rope, we'll save you". Fred said, "No, I'm praying to God, he'll save me, I've started so I'll finish". Anyway, the rain kept coming down and the water kept coming up, until finally Fred was washed right off the top of the house and drowned. Now as you can imagine, Fred wasn't very happy about this and appearing at the pearly gates, he demanded an interview with God. He went in to see God and said "God, I'm not happy. There I was down there believing in you and praying for you to save me and you did nothing". God turned around to him and in a deep voice said, "But Fred, I sent you a dinghy, I sent you a lifeboat and I even sent you a helicopter". Now the point that you can make with this story is that sometimes we do not spot the opportunities that are passing us because we're focused on the wrong area. It's a very powerful story to talk about missed opportunities.

Here are a number of quotations that you'll be able to use in your speeches and presentations:

*If you don't invest very much then defeat doesn't hurt very much and winning is not very exciting* – by Dick Vermeil.

This one from Bob Richards, who was a pole vault champion – *Ingenuity plus courage plus work equals miracles.*

*Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.*

One from Franklin D Roosevelt – *The only limit to our realisation of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.*

Nelson Boswell – *The first and most important step towards success is the feeling that we can succeed.*

William James – *If you only care enough for a result you will almost certainly attain it.*

Thomas Carlisle – *A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder.*

*The price of success is perseverance. The price of failure comes cheaper.*

Winston Churchill – *The empires of the future are empires of the mind.*

Michael Border – *Success on any major scale requires that you accept responsibility. In the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have is the ability to take on responsibility.*

*Use the talents you possess for the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except the best.*

Eleanor Roosevelt – *It's not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself.*

Now, let me finish off with the Blondin story. This makes a great ending to many speeches and presentations and you'll see me deliver it on the video. It's one of the best stories I know. I've mentioned it to you a number of times and as I told you, I bothered to get the detail as well, which brings the story to life.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 1859 Charles Blondin, whose real name was Jean Francois Gravelait, decided to walk on a tight rope across Niagara Falls. Unfortunately the man who owned the falls wouldn't let him do it and Blondin ended up doing his death-defying feat across Niagara Gorge, about half a mile away. A cable was strung across the gorge, 1000 feet in length, 180 feet above the swirling waters below. Now, Niagara is a North American Indian word meaning *Thunder Water*, an appropriately named river. A small group of onlookers had gathered to see Blondin do this death-defying feat and standing on the end of the rope, he turned around to them and said, "Do you believe that I can walk on this tightrope all the way this 1000 feet across the gorge to Goat Island in the middle and come back safely?" The people said, "Um, we don't know". So Blondin got on the rope and walked all the way there in the wind and the rain and walked all the way back safely and the crowd went wild and Blondin went, "Shh! Do you now believe that I can walk along this rope to the middle carrying this large ball of string, lower it down to a boat in the water below called the Maid in the Mist, pull up a bottle, take a drink and throw it all the way and come back safely?" and the crowd said, "We believe." So Blondin went and did it, he walked to the middle of the rope, lowered down the string, pulled up the bottle, took a drink, threw it all the way and came back safely and the crowd went wild and he went, "Shh!, do you now believe that I can walk all the way to Goat Island, 1000 feet across this tightrope in the wind and the rain and come back safely with somebody on my shoulders?" And the crowd said, "We believe." So Blondin said, "Who is it going to be?" And as you can imagine nobody wanted to volunteer .... Now there are a number of points that can be made at the end of this story, e.g. And isn't that always the case? That so many people say they believe but they won't climb on board? You and I know that success is certainly about saying *We believe*, it's

certainly climbing on board and it's certainly taking action. For without action, there is no result.

That's one way you could end it. In fact, it was Harry Colcroft, who was Blondin's manager, who was the unfortunate person who had to sit on his shoulders for that walk across Niagara Gorge. So if you were talking to a group of people who were managers or directors of a business, you could then finish it off by saying, "And the only person who really believed was his manager and isn't it true that as managers of people, as leaders of people, we have to have total belief in our people, otherwise they won't take the actions we want them to take." So, there's another way to end the story, but certainly Blondin is one of the best stories I've ever come across. Told well with all the details, you can really move the audience.

So, as always it's been a pleasure to be with you, it's been a pleasure to share my ideas with you and I'm certain it will be a pleasure to be with you again. From me Peter Thomson, until we speak again, Goodbye for now!



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