

MTD Quick Tips

Everything You've Learnt About Public Speaking Is Wrong!

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Everything You've Learnt About Public Speaking Is Wrong!

Doug Staneart is the CEO of MTD'S Leaders Institute in the States.

He does an awesome job out there and is infamous for his presentation skills courses. I thought I'd ask him for his top tips on speaking in public.

Here's what Doug had to say:

"Everything You've Learned About Public Speaking Is Wrong!"

Many myths about public speaking have been passed along from person to person over the years, and the one thing that is consistent about these myths is that the people who pass them along are still nervous about speaking.

After facilitating over 200 public speaking classes and never having a single person fail to significantly reduce his/her fear of speaking, I had a dramatic realisation.

Just about everything I was taught about public speaking while I was in school and from well-meaning peers and co-workers - WAS WRONG!

Below are the top three myths that we have identified, and some simple tips that will help you reduce your fear or nervousness.

Myth #1: If you write out a talk and memorise it, you'll be more comfortable.

This is the fastest, easiest way to make your presentation boring and canned and to make you more nervous. When you memorise a talk word-for-word, any slight hick-up or distraction can throw you off track. That can increase your nervousness.

Instead, write out just a few key points and practice giving stories or examples to back up each point.

Myth #2: More facts/details will better clarify your topic.

Most of us believe that a little is good, more is better, and a whole bunch is just right in public speaking.

If I can give you 10 reasons why my topic is true, then that is obviously better than two or three reasons, right?

Well in public speaking, the more points we offer, the more confused our audience can become. A good rule of thumb is five or less. So, after you decide on your topic, narrow down the key points that support your topic to around five key points or fewer. If your talk requires more than five points, then it would be best to divide the presentation into two different talks.

Myth #3: Nervous habits make you a poor speaker.

Most people think that "Uhms," talking fast, and nervous gestures are bad, but in fact, these things can make you very relatable to your audience. "Uhm" is a normal word in the English language. We say this word all the time in normal conversation. When it's not there, the speaker can sound phony and forced. Plus, I've found that if you try to get yourself to stop saying "Uhm," you'll probably just start saying it more often anyway. Also, when people speak fast and move more, they show energy and enthusiasm.

I've had many speakers come through my classes who were scared to get up and speak at the beginning of the program, but when they did speak, the audience thought that they were excellent speakers. The audience saw the nervousness and assumed it was enthusiasm.

Realise that speaking well is like learning to play golf.

If you get a group of hackers together to coach each other, you're just going to get a group of people very proficient at a bad golf swing. However, if you get a good coach, he can shave strokes off in no time. If you really want to get good at public speaking quickly, get a good coach who doesn't buy-in to all the speaking myths.

Until the next time, take care of yourself

Live, love and laugh

Sean
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About Sean McPheat



Sean McPheat

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Founder and MD of international management development firm MTD Training, Sean McPheat is widely regarded as a leading authority on modern day management and leadership.

Sean is a bestselling author, and has been recognised for his own business building skills through the **British Business Awards** and has been featured in the **Who's Who Of Britain's Business Elite**.

He has been a regular judge for the UK's Young Enterprise Programme but was not as horrible as Simon Cowell (well almost!)



Sean has been featured on **CNN International, the BBC, SKY, ITV, The Guardian, Forbes, Arena Magazine, Marketing Weekly, Business Zone, Winning Edge** and radio stations such as BBC WM and LBC (London's Big Conversation).

Sean has over **250 media credits** to his name and his weekly email tips go out to over **60,000 people** interested in management and development strategies.

Sean is also a **much sought after media figure and motivational speaker** on all topics related to management, HR, business improvement and entrepreneurialism.