

“Power Speaking”

Achim Nowak

Notes by Dave Kraft

Her message was unmistakable: Be expansive. Say it from the gut. Speak with conviction and passion. Send it from deep within you, all of it.

Unless the tools are integrated with a clear sense of who we are and what we project to the world, they will remain exactly what they are: an empty set of tricks.

An audience will be dazzled by the tricks and the “shtick.” For a while, anyway. But what it responds to, in the end, is never what we say or do. It is the personal essence that we convey.

VOLUME

Of all the disconnects in public speaking, the volume disconnect is the most jarring.

CLARITY

PACE

A rapid-fire delivery, much like sloppy diction, demands an inordinate effort on behalf of the listener to comprehend the speaker’s intent. Pauses are a powerful and essential part of any presentation. Pauses are those beautiful moments when meaning happens and common ground emerges. Seasoned speakers, however, have learned to retain their energy in a moment of silence. Our goal as we speak is to find variety in our pace. A dynamic presenter does not drone on but modulates her pace.

EMPHASIS

We can raise our volume when we pronounce this word. We can stretch the word, slow down the word, elongate the word, linger on key sounds embedded in the word.

SELF-AWARE, NOT SELF-CONSCIOUS

David had not fully made the switch from self- judgment to self-awareness.

Exceptional public speakers almost always transcend what is appropriate.

Savvy speakers move toward their audience, or a segment of their audience,

True, we won’t offend anyone that way. It’s also unlikely that we’ll engage or inspire anyone.

Trust your gestures. Don't tinker with them. Don't stop the flow just because you have an audience.

I urge you to start experimenting with a wider movement range. Be willing to transcend what is naturally comfortable for you.

I rarely come across the presenter who needs to "tone down" her or his gestures. Most of us have an overdeveloped internal "gesture meter," and it usually has done far too good of a job of negating our gesture vocabulary.

Speakers who don't make a lot of eye contact don't know that they don't make eye contact.

Myth #1: Some people don't like to receive eye contact. It frightens them and they feel put on the spot.

Myth #2: If you're nervous at the beginning of a presentation, don't look at the audience but look slightly above their heads!

Myth #3: The best way to make eye contact with an audience is to consistently scan the room.

Myth #4: If I don't scan, I won't be able to give everyone the impression that I'm including them.

Myth #5: I can't possibly hold eye contact all the time. I have to look away when I don't know what to say.

Myth #6: In some cultures, eye contact is considered rude and offensive. I don't want to offend anyone with my eye contact

Myth #7: It is impossible to give eye contact in a darkened room, when I cannot see my audience.

Choosing a clear intention is the first step in shifting the attention away from me, the speaker, to you, the audience. The best intentions are simple, clear action verbs that describe in one word the impact I wish to have on my audience.

With this presentation, I want to . . .

- Move my audience
- Motivate my audience
- Challenge my audience
- Provoke my audience
- Enchant my audience
- Inspire my audience

- Persuade my audience
- Transform my audience
- Entertain my audience
- Calm my audience

Finding the Intention

I was witnessing a classic duel between the significance of content and the power of personal essence. Our goal, of course, is to create a beautiful fusion between these two elements.

When I asked Denise to share with me one tip about public speaking, she said: “Make every single person in the audience feel that you care.”

Sincerity—and a genuine way of showing interest in one’s audience—is one of those core values that is essential for a speaker’s success.

Would a core belief that all people long for meaning and connection not serve us better?

Values have true power if they are aligned with universal principles and are practiced consistently.