***STEAL THE SHOW: FROM SPEECHES, TO INTERVIEWS, TO DEAL-CLOSING PITCHES, HOW TO GUARANTEE A STANDING OVATION FOR ALL THE PERFORMANCES IN YOUR LIFE***

An inspiring program full of essential advice for spotlight lovers and wallflowers alike that will teach readers how to bring any crowd to its feet.

Every day there are moments when you must persuade, inform, and motivate others effectively. Each of those moments requires you, in some way, to play a role, to heighten the impact of your words, and to manage your emotions and nerves. Every interaction is a performance, whether you’re speaking up in a meeting, pitching a client, or walking into a job interview.

In *Steal the Show,* *New York Times* best‑selling author Michael Port draws on his experience as an actor and as a highly successful corporate speaker and trainer to teach readers how to make the most of every presentation and interaction. He demonstrates how the methods of successful actors can help you connect with, inspire, and persuade any audience. His key strategies for commanding an audience’s attention include developing a clear focus for every performance, making sure you engage with your listeners, and finding the best role for yourself in order to convey your message with maximum impact.

**BIO FOR MICHAEL PORT**

Called“an uncommonly honest author" by the *Boston Globe*, a "marketing guru" by *The Wall Street Journal*, and a “sales guru” by the *Financial Times*, Michael Port is a *NY Times* bestselling author of six books including *Book Yourself Solid,* *The Think Big Manifesto* andhis hot new release, *Steal the Show*.

Interestingly, he is probably the only *NY Times* bestselling business book author to have also been a successful professional actor, guest starring on shows like Sex & The City, Law & Order, Third Watch, All My Children and in films like The Pelican Brief and Down to Earth.

These days, Michael can be seen regularly on MSNBC, CNBC, and PBS as an on air expert in communication and business development.

**Public Speaking Related Interview Questions (in no particular order even though they’re numbered):**

Actually this is a great question to kick off the interview: What makes you qualified to teach public speaking and performance?

1. **What’s the best way to create a powerful opening?**Bottom line: cut to the chase. Don’t waste time with filler such as, “I’m so happy to be here.” What’s the alternative, that you’re pissed off you’re there? *Show* them you are happy to be there. This is art; there isn’t one way to make it. If you’re relaxed and can smoothly move right into your presentation, you’ll be fine.
2. **What’s your step-by-step advice for creating content for a speech?**I have a seven-step method for creative and effective content development and writing.
3. Brain dump everything you know on the content topic.
4. Organize the brain dump by compartmentalizing related ideas.
5. Note your direct experiences that relate to your main topic.
6. Gather the direct data, either anecdotal or scientific, that support your topic.
7. Identify any holes, or vulnerabilities of logic or persuasiveness in your content.
8. Let the editing process begin.
9. Cut, cut, cut! Your audience often needs a lot less information to get to the “AHA” moment than you might think.
10. **What’s the secret weapon for putting a creative and compelling performance?**Contrast is the “secret weapon” for producing creative and compelling content and wowing an audience with your performance.

Build in contrast of three different kinds:

1. Structural Contrast
2. Emotional Contrast
3. Delivery Contrast
4. **How can I tell stories that have the audience on the edge of their seat?**

The three-act structure is likely the most helpful storytelling structure

Act One: The given circumstance. Setting, time, and place.

Act Two: The conflict. There’s a struggle or an obstacle in the way.

Act Three: The resolution. A change. Progress. A transformation.

1. **Um, like, so… how can I stop my habits of using filler words?**It’s a common nervous habit to use filler words. The better rehearse you are the less you will use them.
2. **My voice cracks, my mouth dries up and I have a nervous cough, how can I stop it so my audience can’t tell how nervous I am?**

These too are all very common habits. It’s important to hydrate well before a performance. You can certainly bring water with you on stage. The more prepared you, the less nervous you will be and the less these habits are likely to continue.

1. **Yikes! My mind blanked in the middle of my presentation. Now what?**

Stay connected to the audience. Create an unexpected moment out of it. If you’re well rehearsed, your material will come back to you. It seems contradictory, but the more you look at the audience rather than the floor or the ceiling, the faster you’ll recall what to say next. Plus, the more relaxed you remain, the easier it will come to you.

1. **What is biggest mistake in public speaking and how can I avoid it?**

The biggest mistake a public speaker can make—and often does make—is underestimating the important of rehearsal. It’s more than just the repetition of it. Effective rehearsals are the best way to reduce anxiety and ultimately steal the show. My seven-step process for successful rehearsals that turn into great performances are:

1. Table reads;
2. Content mapping;
3. Blocking (I also address props, costumes, and use of multi-media);
4. Improvisation and rewriting;
5. An invited rehearsal (maybe even with a coach or peer with actual training);
6. Open rehearsal – with people in your target audience;
7. Dress/tech.
8. **I feel lost on stage. Where’s the best place to stand and what I do with my hands when talking?**

For most speeches, if you can, try to avoid speaking from behind a podium or any type of furniture, for that matter. It puts a barrier between you and the audience. People will often choose to stay behind a podium as a way of hiding from the audience or simply because they need to “read” their speech.

Instead, have a well-rehearse speech and learn blocking.

Blocking is the term used for how you will move during your performance. If a speech is not blocked or rehearsed, you can see the telltale signs. Typically you’ll see the speaker: pacing or wandering around the stage; hiding behind the podium or other props; or continually looking down at the ground or at the computer screen.

When you block your movement, you’re moving in a way that enhances your message and creates dynamics through contrast. It actually also helps you remember your material because it anchors it in different parts of the stage, and you can continue to revisit that part of the stage when unpacking that content.

There are some basic blocking no-nos:

* + Don’t spend too much time close to the front row if you are not on a stage;
	+ Don’t spend too much time in one part of the stage;
	+ Don’t present in the dark—“finding your light” is a theater term for making sure that you are always lit.

As for your hands, don’t worry about them. If you’re truly connected to your audience and are passionately working to deliver on the promise of your speech, you won’t be thinking about your hands and they’ll do exactly what they’re supposed to do.

1. **I’m constantly told to slow down. Is it true you believe that slowing down is misguided advice? What should I do instead?**

You don’t have to slow down. Focus on pausing. Audiences can easily absorb the important points if you give them pause time.

1. **How can I attract clients through my speeches?**

In my work with Book Yourself Solid, I talk about people buying in portion to the amount of trust that you have earned from them. Build trust with them throughout your presentation. Demonstrate through your presentation that you are the category expert, be likeable and trust worthy.

Audience interaction is a great way to establish this. I identify five types of audience interaction:

1. Ice breakers and trust builders
2. Reminders and reinforcers
3. Role players
4. Creative, high-contrast exercises
5. Q&A Tips and Traps
6. **How can I motivate my audience to take action after my presentation? (i.e. follow me on Facebook, sign up for an online program, buy a book in the back of the room)**This process is actually set in the first stage of preparing for a presentation. This simple five-step exercise will help you:
7. What type of performance are you going to give?
8. Who is the audience?
9. How will your audience benefit from the performance?
10. What is your call to action? Identify this hear and begin to craft your performance around it.
11. How can you leverage your performance?

Of course whatever your call to action may be, make sure you reinforce it before the applause at the end.

1. **What’s the best way to close a speech to leave a lasting impression?**

Closing your speech or presentation might even be more important than the opening.

Avoid saying, “if you remember nothing else, remember, X.” It gives the audience the impression that the performance could have been delivered in that one line.

If you’re presenting a curriculum-based speech, you need to provide a concise yet comprehensive short review of all the audience has learned without going into every detail.

1. **What’s the best way to conduct a meaningful Q&A session for my audience? And how can I avoid an audience member hijacking the microphone?**

A skilled speaker and performer needs to professionally manage their Q&A sessions after a speech.

My recommendation is not to take questions at the end. It’s better if the Q&A is a separate segment, if possible.

In most cases, your Q&A will include lots of relevant, on-topic questions. Make your answers super-specific, crisp, and short.

If you have a questioner who is confrontational or won’t give up the mic, you can be gentle or fierce and need to have the discernment to know which is required and when. Say, “Thank you, I’m going to take the next question,” and take the floor back.

1. **I’m great when delivering business presentations but I completely clam up on a date or when giving a toast to my own family. How can I “Steal the Show” in my personal life?**In *Steal the Show*, you’ll discover the role you want to play in the show that is your own life. You’ll decide whether you are up for a leading or supporting role. Often we make the choice to play small, when we haven’t given ourselves the chance to see the big opportunities in front of us.

You first need to identify the roles you want to play in your life and which roles you want to “retire.” If you want to improve your dating game, then think about what that role would look like and start acting as if.

1. **There’s so much competition for jobs now, I can I use these tips to rock an interview?**

Identify the role you want to play and start acting as if. It’s also important to stay in the moment. Pay attention with all your sense so you can adapt accordingly. If you’re being interviewed by an executive who looks exhausted, makes poor eye contact while slurping a massive cappuccino with a half-eaten sandwich on his desk, these are all real facts that you should notice as they will affect your performance.

1. **Can you really guarantee that I can get a standing ovation? If so, please tell me how!**Have them stand up at the end of your presentation before you do your close. Seriously. Yes, it’s a wee bit manufactured … but so is all show biz.