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# **HEROIC PUBLIC SPEAKING®**

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**Guide To Making World Saving  
Speeches**

**50 Tips You Can't Afford To Ignore  
If You Want To Wow Your Audience and  
Win Praise And Plaudits Every Time**

# We can make you a better speaker

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## 100% guaranteed

Hello, my name is Michael Port. My partner, Amy Mead, and I can make you a better speaker. When you elevate your public appearances from “speeches” to “performances,” then you save the world and change lives.



Credit: <http://christopherschloegel.com/>

It doesn't matter whether your performance is in front of your future boss, your current team, your lover, a prospective client or a full Carnegie Hall, being able to make a perform with power will improve your life and the lives of those around you.

For a long time I studied drama, performance and theater.

I spent three years earning my MFA (Master of Fine Arts) at NYU's Graduate Acting Program, arguably one of the three best programs in the country along with Yale and Juilliard.

My schoolmates included Emmy Award and Golden Globe winners like Michael Hall (star of *Dexter* and *6 Feet Under*), Daniel Dae-Kim (star of *Lost* and *Hawaii 5-0*), Billy Crudup (star of *Almost Famous*, *Mission Impossible*), Debra Messing (star *Will & Grace* and *Smash*), Wood Harris (star of *The Wire*), David Costable (*Breaking Bad* and *Low Winter Sun*) to name just a few.

Yes – I'm name-dropping. But my point is that you've got to give your audience the same experience they get at the movies, or on Broadway.

I did everything from David Mamet to Shakespeare. I guest-starred in shows like *Sex & The City*, *Third Watch*, *All My Children*, *Law & Order*, *The Pelican Brief*, *Down to Earth*, *Another World*, and more. I did countless TV commercials and voice-overs for companies like Budweiser, AT&T, Coors Beer, Pizza Hut, MTV ... the list goes on.

It's true that on the first day I began my graduate level acting training at NYU, the last thing I envisioned was becoming a "business guru." But I've earned my way to that label with great content, stellar speeches, and smart branding.

I've been called "an uncommonly honest author" by the *Boston Globe*, a "marketing guru" by *The Wall Street Journal*, a "sales guru" by Canada's *Financial Post*, "inspiring and practical" by Michael Hyatt, and "ingenious" by Michael Gerber. Daniel Pink praised my "practical, savvy advice," Neil Rackham said, "Port will challenge your thinking," and Tim Ferris said my books are "required reading."

I write for the biggest publications including Entrepreneur Magazine and Forbes and appear on major television networks from MSNBC's *Your Business* to *One-on-One* on PBS. Hundreds of thousands of audience members have given me the highest overall speaker ratings at conferences around the world.

But now I do something different. Now, I dedicate myself to making you a better speaker. 100% guaranteed. It's a simple but big promise. This guide is my gift to you. It's just a tiny fraction of what we teach in our Heroic Public Speaking training programs.

It's my hope that you'll read this and – one day soon – raise your hand and say, "I'm ready to perform."

- Michael

# 50

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## Public Speaking Tips You Can't Afford To Ignore

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If You Want To Wow Your Audience and  
Win Praise And Plaudits Every Time

1

**The speech starts with your bio before you walk on stage.**

That means that your introduction (which is often known as your “bio” in the trade) should be over-the-top powerful and impressive. Don't worry about being bombastic or self-congratulatory: you can immediately disarm the audience with something sincere and self-effacing as soon as you open your mouth.

A disembodied announcer or the person who invited you will normally give your bio. It's fine – in fact, it's *great* – if they introduce you with gushing praise. It sounds a bit phony if you talk about yourself that way.

## 2

### **You DON'T have to tell them what you're going to tell them.**

You've probably heard it before:

*"Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em. Tell 'em. Tell 'em what you've told 'em."*

That's not necessarily bad advice. But it doesn't have to be that way.

After all, every other speaker is doing it. If you're going to make your audience sit up and pay attention, wouldn't it be worth doing something that every other speaker *isn't* doing?

Try a *pattern-interrupt* instead. Open with a surprise, a shock, or an interaction. Open with something that makes a connection, or something that entertains, or something that leaves you exposed. Be different. Be memorable.

## 3

### **Cut, cut, cut!**

I often see (and you often see) extraneous detail added into stories and speeches that disrupt the flow. Cut to the meat. Cut to the chase.

Include specifics at critical parts of the story. You don't need to pad out your speech to make an impact. Instead, you need to focus – with intention – on what's important. Your audience needs a lot less information to get to the "aha" moment than you might think.

## 4

### **An entire story is designed to serve the end.**

Whatever precedes the punch line must serve the pay-off. See point 3. Do I need to know what color socks you're wearing? Or how long it took you to get here today?

## 5

### **Establish right away that you know what the world looks like for them—and what it could look like.**

Vividly paint the picture. All world-saving performances are transformational experiences for your audience. Start out by showing “here’s what you’ve got today, and here’s how it could be.”

This builds immediate rapport and hooks the audience’s interest. You know them. You understand them. You’ve got their back ... and you’ve got a better way.

## 6

### **You must reward them for doing something or contributing in some way.**

Don’t encourage interaction just to ignore it. Your audience isn’t made up of dumb animals: they don’t need treats. Instead, they’re sentient and intelligent living beings who need simple acknowledgement.

Imagine being asked to participate in something – whether it’s holding a door open for a

friend or running a project – and not even getting a nod of thanks in return. You start to feel bad right away.

**7**

**Use open hands with your palms up instead of your finger for pointing.**

Sometimes the finger looks like a gun. It's also rude in some cultures. Instead, extend your hands with your palms up as if offering up alms.

It's more gracious, more inclusive and more giving.

**8**

**People say “yes” when we’ve affected them intellectually, emotionally or physically.**

Can you include those three elements in your presentation?

Can you give them intellectual gristle to chew on? Can you make them gasp or cry or laugh with an emotional connection? Can you get them physically engaged (you can tell by the way they're sitting) with your ideas and message?

If not, learn how and start today.

## 9

### **Outline your content and then unpack it.**

If you're teaching content (which is distinct from a "message") outline first, then go back and unpack it.

This isn't the same as "tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em." It's a learning plan for what's coming next. It serves as both high-level overview before you get granular, and a teaser for the exciting content still to come.

## 10

### **Use props.**

What can you show or demonstrate or depict with objects rather than words? Can you ethically assault your audience's visual senses as well as their auditory senses?

Props aid recall: if you want to be remembered, you can be visually arresting (without dying your hair bright red) by using props to drive your point home. Most speakers don't do this. That's just one of the reasons why you should.

## 11

### **Use contrast and extremes to create excitement and keep attention.**

Contrast can be emotional, physical and structural. This basic story-arc technique is integral to every great play, every great film, and every great piece of music.



Consider your performance like a roller-coaster ride. Can you take me to the edge of a cliff before artfully lowering me, with love and care, to a safe place? Can you make the highs higher and the lows lower?

**12**

**Keep moving forward. Never let the energy drop.**

You're on stage to take your audience to their final destination. Keep your foot on the gas pedal. You'll have uphill moments when your *speed* drops, but the *power and intensity* increase. You can be both calm and energetic. Practice.

**13**

**Audiences like to think that events on the stage are happening spontaneously.**

They like to be surprised. The great actor does this brilliantly. You, as a speaker, need to do this as well. The best way to be effortlessly spontaneous is to rehearse to the point of mastery.

How often do you have to stop and think about "spontaneously" adjusting your shoelaces? Never. Because you know the role inside out. When you know your material you can deliver it like it's the first time, *every time* you perform it.

## 14

### **Stand and land.**

Let your punch lines, point lines, and purpose lines land. That means you don't move while you're delivering them. You remain physically rooted to the spot so that your body reinforces the gravity of your words.

## 15

### **You can move and talk at the same time.**

People do it all the time in real life. The idea that you can't walk and talk at the same time is ridiculous.

But don't sway, and don't move when you're landing on your most important points (see "Stand and Land").

## 16

### **Don't say, "I'm glad to be here."**

Show them that you're glad to be there instead. Your audience should see it in your actions and hear it in your words.

Besides, what's the alternative? That you're *not* glad to be there? Don't insult their intelligence.

17

**Don't tell them you're going to tell a story.**

Just tell the story.

18

**Every rule is made to be broken.**

But to break the rules of performance, you need to know what the rules are. You need to know why they exist and exactly why you're breaking them.

When you break the rules with purpose, you can produce a better and more effective result. Bertolt Brecht was famous for regularly breaking the "rule" of the fourth wall and he got powerful results.

19

**Be very conscientious about connecting the dots  
or you'll lose your audience.**

If you're presenting a series of interconnected concepts or stories or characters, make it as simple as possible to understand. Remember: even though you know your story inside out, your audience is hearing it for the first time.

**20**

### **Give them time.**

If you like to encourage note-taking during your performance, make sure you give people enough time to write down what you want them to write down. Spell things out if necessary.

You'll lose your audience very quickly if they've got their heads stuck in their notebooks or laptops.

**21**

### **Never apologize for the amount of time you don't have.**

The minute you apologize for what they're not getting, your audience will start to feel that they're missing out on something. They should feel that the amount of time you have is the perfect amount of time.

You can blow their mind in just a few minutes. Look at all those great TED talks for inspiration.

**22**

### **Let them go early.**

Audiences love to be let out a few minutes early—even if they LOVE your performance.

There are no prizes for endurance in performance. Let them leave a few minutes ahead of schedule. This is especially important if you've started late (through no fault of your own, of course).

## 23

### **Enlist the self-proclaimed experts in the room.**

There's always somebody who knows more than you – or thinks they do. Get them on your side. Talk them up. Kill them with lavish praise.

It'll help knock the chips off their shoulders and get them supporting your message.

## 24

### **Embellishment is positively OK.**

You can paint a more vivid picture with brighter colors. It's a performance, a show. Be honest, but remember you're not performing under oath, for goodness' sake.

You can combine multiple stories into one story if it produces a better result. Go for what is most dramatic and effective to get your message across.

## 25

### **Remember they don't know what you know.**

It's the first time they've heard your info (see point 19). That means even though you're the expert, you're talking to interested students, not peers. Don't assume prior knowledge. It can only help your message if you're comprehensive.

Don't use acronyms, or if you do, explain them the first time round.

## 26

### **Show them what the world will look like if they DON'T change.**

Make it clear that if they don't follow your advice, or come with you on your journey, then their world will remain the same – if not get considerably worse – than it is today.

## 27

### **Study stand-up comedy.**

Watch stand up comedians. Watch their set-up, delivery and pay-off. See how they own the stage. Stand up comedians can turn a water bottle into a tool for creating magic moments.

## 28

### **Be careful using idioms.**

Across cultures – even cultures that share a language – there are big idiomatic differences that can turn your message opaque for an audience who doesn't “get it.”

If you're an American talking to a British audience about bangs, bleachers, boondoggles or fanny-packs then you've likely lost them already.

## 29

### **Don't make jokes about difficult topics.**

Even the most skilled stand up comedians have a tough time landing jokes about difficult topics that are awkward, sensitive, or otherwise confronting. If you want to make yourself the butt of your jokes, that kind of self-deprecating humor can work very well.

Suicide is not funny.

That doesn't mean you can't lighten up the mood when talking about difficult subjects but that's different than poking fun or making jokes.

**30**

**If you tell them you care about something  
you also need to tell them why.**

It's not good enough to say, "I'm a strong proponent of women's rights." You've got to hook them in with your reasons. Your *why* is what makes your beliefs more powerful and your cause stronger.

**31**

**Boom, boom, BANG. Boom, boom, boom, BANG.**

The rule of three is one of the rules of performance you need to know how to use.

It's powerful, it's potent, and it packs a punch (see what I did there?)

**32**

**Understand stage blocking.**

You need to remain physically open so everyone in the room can see you at all times. That means you don't hide or turn to face anybody other than your audience ... unless for dramatic effect.



## 33

### **Deliver big moments center stage (usually).**

Centering yourself physically on the stage is the same as bolding and centering a headline in a newspaper. It says: “this is important – pay attention.”

When you designate center stage as the pivotal point for your performance, you can more effectively use the rest of the stage to support your main message.

There are always exceptions to this concept.

## 34

### **That said, don't head straight for center stage.**

When coming on stage for the first time, avoid making a beeline directly to center of stage and then starting your speech. It looks stiff, clunky and amateurish.

## 35

### **Lean how to rehearse.**

Rehearsal is key to performance. It's not just repetition, but training.

If you have to stop when you're rehearsing, start back up at the exact same emotional, physical and energetic state. Otherwise, you'll lose the through-line and arc of the speech.

**36**

**When you land a joke, bask in it.**

If public speaking is notoriously difficult, making people laugh when you're performing is *devilishly* tough. Make the most of your moments in the spotlight.

**37**

**Voice and speech training is not something you master in an hour.**

I studied daily for three years in a Master of Fine Arts acting program at NYU. True performers never stop learning. Voice and speech training is mandatory for all performers, not least for their physical health.

Sure, we've all heard stories about accidental film stars who were spotted in line at Starbucks. But they'll always be the exception (which is why it makes for such a good story).

**38**

**Don't push.**

(Push is a theater term for over-acting.)

When you push, you can't show emotion. When you push, the work feels false and self-obsessed. It's insincere. Insincerity is the enemy of truth. Truth is integral to performance.

## 39

### **Just because you're feeling it, they might not be.**

Major emotion for you as the speaker doesn't always translate to major emotion for your audience. It's only in rehearsal and practice that we find out what works and what doesn't.

You might be moved to tears while your audience is bored to tears.

## 40

### **Endings: get everything in before audiences clap.**

Then, get off the stage quickly. Don't let them see you doing housekeeping. It breaks the theatrical experience. You're the performer. They're not interested in watching you collect questionnaires.

## 41

### **You can also stay on stage at the end if you invite them to join you there.**

That way you're "hosting the party." You don't want them grabbing you in the restroom: nothing dissipates magic like a damp handshake in the gents.

42

### **Anyone can make a sexy sizzle reel.**

Meeting planners want to know you can “hold the stage” for an extended period of time. Make sure you can show them video of 5-15 minutes of continuous performance where you deliver a message and engage the audience. No speaker gets hired just because they have a good video editor.

43

### **Get right to it.**

Most speakers waste time on too much exposition and preparation and the audience starts thinking, “Let’s go already!”

Instead, hit the accelerator hard and launch straight on as you mean to continue. Let them know what they’re in for by what they experience from you in the first 30 seconds.

44

### **Stop using the “story teller voice.”**

It’s false. You tell a story to 10,000 the same way you tell the story to your best friend. You don’t use some dramatic made-up voice. It’s another mark of an amateur. Study your favorite speakers. It’s like there are just the two of you in the room.

## 45

### **Reduce.**

You have no time for self-indulgence. You must be clinical and surgical with your material and your message. Don't use overly obfuscating verbiage when you can say things simply.

We get attached to bits that really don't further the story or resonate with the audience, perhaps because they're funny or easy for us or have a special meaning to us.

But it's not about us. It's never about us. It's about *them*.

## 46

### **You don't have to slow down.**

Most speaking teachers tell you to slow down. Sometimes that makes sense. But if we're worried about speed, we're focused on the wrong thing.

Instead of slowing down, focus on *pausing*. Speakers that speak too slowly have a soporific effect.

I speak quickly. And I pause at the right places. That creates rhythm. I slow down when it serves the speech to slow down. Remember how contrast creates compelling theatrical experiences? One note, even the most beautiful note, gets boring over time.

## 47

Audiences can easily absorb the important points if you give them pause time.

## **If you have to explain a joke... It's just not funny.**

No joke gets funnier with explanation. Choose a better joke or let it go altogether.

**48**

## **Never turn your back to the audience unless it's intentional to make a point or convey an emotion.**

When you need to move upstage (that's toward the back of the stage, away from the audience) you walk backwards.

**49**

## **Never yell at your audience.**

This shouldn't need saying, but we sometimes let our standards slip when we're not in "performance mode." You're ALWAYS performing when you're in front of a group of people.

If you need to get everybody's attention after a coffee break, say, simply raise your hand and stand silently. People will follow. That's powerful.

**50**

**If you think you're going to rise to the moment,  
you're wrong.**

Under pressure, you don't rise to the occasion; you fall back on your training. If you think you're going to come up with the right material during the speech without hours of preparation, think again.

You must be prepared beyond preparation if you want to make life-saving, world-changing speeches.

That's what Heroic Public Speaking will do for you: make you a much, much better speaker. Guaranteed.

YOU CAN BECOME A BETTER SPEAKER

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**HEROIC PUBLIC SPEAKING®**

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100% GUARANTEED