



The Executive Woman's Coach Newsletter September 2004

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Watching the Democratic Convention this week is an *up close and personal* study of presentation differences. There are those who speak to us and then there are those who mesmerize us. I can still remember watching Representative Barbara Jordan's keynote speech at the 1976 convention. She was captivating with her strong, steady voice and words that were filled with wisdom and common sense. How do charismatic speakers captivate us with just their words? That is what I wanted to know and have spent the last three years learning more. As executive women, we must be able to reach and influence others through our messages. These key ideas will help you whether you are presenting at a staff meeting or speaking to a large audience.

Here are three keys to becoming a brilliant or at least better speaker:

1. What is your message? What do you want them to remember?
2. What words do you use and how do you use them?
3. What is your body language saying?

1. What is your message? What do you want them to remember?

Write out your premise; in one sentence, what is your presentation about? Identify the 1-3 points you want them to remember. Structure your presentation like a stick figure with a circle at the top, a line down from the center and 2-3 lines crossing the center line, like arms. Next to the top circle write out the premise of your presentation. On the left side of the arm write the point you want to make. On the right side write examples or stories that support your point.

Your premise	○ -	One sentence on subject of your presentation
Point 1	---- ----	Your stories or examples supporting your point
Point 2	---- ----	Your stories or examples supporting your point
Point 3	---- ----	Your stories or examples supporting your point

Your stories and examples are crucial. They will remember your stories even when they forget your name or what you said. So it is with your stories and examples that you can ensure they will walk away remembering your message.

If you don't have a specific story, make one up to support your point. You can say, "Imagine an employee named Susan who..." Then practice your story with trusted associates... trusted because they will tell you if it doesn't work. "*For example*" is a key phrase that will bring your audience's attention back to you. Most really boring speakers just tell us information without stories or examples. Watch for that the next time you are rolling your eyes during a presentation looking for an escape route.

Use numbers and percentages to help give your audience a sense of scope and magnitude. If you are using numbers in your presentation, learn how to breathe life into them. Instead of 46%, say "*almost half*." With 20%, add, "*That means for every thousand we sell, 200 are returned*." Even if it is obvious to you, it may not be clear to others.

2. What words do you use and how do you use them?

The first 30 seconds and the last 30 seconds are the most important parts of your speech. Practice so your opening is crisp and you can be making eye contact. As you begin your speech, pick one person and make eye contact and speak to them, then pause and pick another person in a different part of the audience. Use an 'I vs. You' ratio of at least 1:2 in the opening. You, you, you. It is all about them. Until they know you care about them, they do not care about your message.

Have a snappy, captivating opening, not 'Thank you for inviting me, I am so happy to be here.' Some suggested openings: *In the next 13 minutes you will learn....The focus of this meeting is critical to the company's future... You have an awesome responsibility of determining...I wish you could have been there when (you are inviting them to come with you)....Imagine my surprise when (you are inviting them to experience surprise).*

Don't be the hero of your stories; tell them about the struggle it took, the hours, the concerns then you can add the success. You want them to realize that you didn't always know the right thing to do. It gives them hope they can do better too. For example, "*I was really concerned about the accuracy of the data and wasn't sure where to begin. This is too important to make assumptions. Fortunately the accounting group was not only willing but also able to validate that numbers. It was a little nerve-racking but we now have the right numbers.*"

There are fat words (theory, abstract) and skinny words (concrete, specific). Use skinny words to create your stories. For example the fat words/concept, "Transportation is a critical part of the plan." Skinny words/concept, "The congestion that would be created by adding a plant in this location is expected to add 20 minutes to the employee's commute time." State your point in terms of results, outcomes.

When you create your stories, use descriptive words that connect with each of the three learning types; visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Visual learners will want to see your story with look, appear, view, show, dawn, reveal, clear, foggy, vivid, crystal clear, flash, snapshot. Auditory learners want to hear your story with listen, sound, make music, tune in/out, all ears, rings a bell, silence, tell, announce, attuned. Kinesthetic learners will want to feel your story with touch, grasp, get hold of, catch on, tap into, throw out, turn around, hard, unfeeling, concrete, impression, touch base.

3. What is your body language?

Walk to the front of the room and stop, make eye contact with two or three people and then begin speaking. Do not begin speaking as you are walking.

Women: keep your hands out of your hair. Wear clothing that doesn't need constant adjustment. Find out in advance if you are going to be on a raised platform. If so think about the shoes that will allow you to climb the stairs easily. Also think about whether you are going to wear a skirt or slacks. I have been in presentations where the woman sat down in a knee-length skirt and her knees were level with our eyes, showing us more than we wanted to see. I have also been in meetings with women in short, tight skirts and they tugged on their skirt hem the entire time. Don't wear big or noisy jewelry, your audience will be distracted and not listen to you.

Men: take change and keys out of your pockets and keep your hands out of your pockets. You may button or unbutton your suit jacket to switch between formal and informal modes.

Women: listen to your voice. The #1 problem with the female speech pattern is ending statements with the voice inflection of a question. A rising pitch makes you sound unsure of yourself or that you are seeking approval. Also, when women are under stress often the pitch of their voice increases and are perceived as hysterical. Focus on keeping the pitch of your voice level. Get a voice coach if you need one, it is an investment in your success.

Ask the Executive Woman's Coach

(This question is just the opposite of one we had last month)

Q. I work with all male sales managers and they never let me finish what I want to say. I get so frustrated. What can I do to get them to hear me?

A. In our culture, people begin responding to ideas before they have been fully presented. Sometimes, as women, we tend to give a lot of background information. One of my coaches helped me become more concise with, "Kathleen, you are giving me way too much information, what's your question? What's your point?" Think about it like asking directions... they only need to know where you want to go, not how you got here.

Consider three options. First, talk with your boss about changing the meeting dynamics so all voices are heard...completely. This usually requires the help of an outside facilitator. Second, stop interruptions by putting your hands up and say, "Please, let me finish". One executive VP dealing with a particularly annoying associate pointed her index finger directly in his face and emphatically informed him "I am not finished." He shut up. Third, make sure your views are heard by the right people after the meeting. It is important your ideas are heard, otherwise why are you there?

Send you questions to KRN@executivewomanscoach.com. If your question is used you will participate in a teleseminar free.

See the Coach:

- August 7, Saturday, WEDU (PBS) Women's Health Fair, Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, FL. 3pm, Taming the Work-Life Balance Puzzle
 - September 10-11, Friday-Saturday, Appreciative Inquiry Seminar, Friday 5:30-9:30, Saturday 9-5. Merritt Island, FL. Webster University. \$100 non-credit.
 - September 28, Tuesday, ABWA, Indian Harbor, FL 5:30pm
- Need a speaker? Call Kathleen!

Upcoming Events:

Teleseminars (all are noon-1pm ET and available 24/7 for 30 days)

- * How to Develop Your "It" (Executive Presence), Thursday, September 9
 - * Avoid Stupid Mistakes even Smart Women Make, Thursday, Oct. 29
- They are free to my coaching clients, and \$25 each for others or 5 for \$75.

CDs of teleseminars are available on the ewcoach.com website.

Rapid Results Retreats (revised dates)

Join me in dazzling Cocoa Beach, Florida for a two day designed for career women who want to create clarity and increase results. The group is limited to 8.

- October 29-31, 2004
- February 4-6, 2005
- April 22-24, 2005

You can find more information at www.executivewomanscoach.com, Events

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