

Connect with Your Audience When You Speak

By Sally Strackbein

We need to connect with other human beings. Human connection is essential to good health, both emotional and physical. Your audience needs you to connect with them.

If you want people to hear what you say, take it in and respond the way you want them to, they need to feel that you care about them and their needs. When you care about people, they respond.

Connecting with an audience is simple, elegant process that anyone can master with practice.

Listen to the audience

Pause before speaking. Start from silence and pause a moment to take in the audience. Receive their support. In most cases, people want you to succeed.

Take a deep breath

Plant your feet on the floor and take at least one deep breath before you start speaking.

Look for the friendly face

As you pause to connect with the audience, look for a person with a friendly face. Start by speaking to that person.

Speak to the eyes

Look into the eyes of an audience member with a soft gaze. Be available for connection, but don't force it or stare. Think in terms of connection rather than "eye contact."

Speak to one person at a time

Speak to one person at a time and take about the amount of time it takes to shake hands and say, "Hello."

Let your authentic self shine through

Be a fresh alternative to the sterile, polished performers widely available on TV, radio, stage and in the movies. People welcome authenticity when it speaks to them.

Speak to the listening

Trust yourself to deviate from prepared material according to the needs and reactions of each special audience you speak to. Listening while speaking takes practice and our Defining Story Speakshop® provides that practice.