

The Purposeful Pause

by Sally Strackbein

Last summer, I was excited to hear a speaker talk on the topic of image and etiquette. Being a nerd, I sometimes find myself challenged in these areas. The speaker came on with energy and continued with energy. In fact, she didn't stop to take a breath for an hour.

Every time I heard a great idea, she was off onto the next thought before I had time to write it down. Not only was I unable to capture the important nuggets, I missed even hearing many because I was still trying to absorb the ones that came before.

When speaking to an audience of one or a thousand, pause after you say something you want them to remember. Let the listeners take in and fully digest each important thought before you go on to the next one.

This same principle holds doubly true when you deliver humor. Don't "step on your lines." Allow your listeners to finish laughing -- then continue.