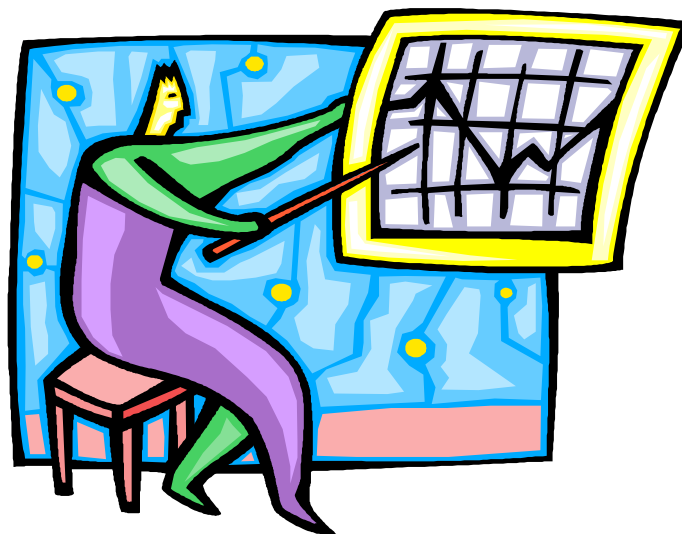


## Common Myths About Making Presentations

Look at each of the following statements. Which ones do you consider “true” and which ones “false”?

1. Memorization is the key to effective presentations. T F
2. The more notes presenters bring with them to the podium, the more successful their speeches will be. T F
3. Any feelings of nervousness are bad for the presenter. T F
4. Presenters should not gesture, as any gestures distract the audience. T F
5. Presenters need not look at the audience more than 50% of the time; they should focus most of their attention on their notes. T F
6. One of the best and most effective ways to begin a speech is to start with a joke. T F
7. If the presenter is one of several speakers on the program, each presenter need not know ahead of time what other presenters are going to say; it is best for the material of others to be new on the day of the presentation. T F
8. A presenter may dress as he or she pleases as long as the presentation is well prepared. T F
9. It is not a good idea to practice a presentation; the material will sound more natural and fresh if the presenter has not gone through it ahead of time. T F
10. The best speaking is done “off the cuff” with little or no preparation. T F

Adapted from *101 Secrets of Highly Effective Speakers*, 2005.



## Your Presentation Comfort Quotient

The following statements express feelings which many people have about presenting. How many of these feelings do you share? How strong are your feelings? Circle the number on the right that best corresponds to how you feel about each one. Be honest!

1 = Always or almost always  
2 = Frequently  
3 = Sometimes

4 = Seldom  
5 = Never

1. I feel nervous when I am going to have to make a presentation to several people. \_\_\_\_\_
2. If I am in front of a group of people, I worry about how I am doing. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When giving a presentation, I try to avoid making much eye contact with my listeners. \_\_\_\_\_
4. When I am making a presentation, I feel that people really aren't listening to me. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I have trouble getting started. I don't know how to begin. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I have trouble organizing my ideas. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Even though I am anxious for my presentation to be over, I don't know how to finish. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I know I say "ah" and "and uh" too frequently. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I think I ramble and have trouble keeping focused. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I have trouble delivering my point in the presentation. \_\_\_\_\_

Now add the numbers you circled to get your total presentation comfort quotient. \_\_\_\_\_

50 – You are very self-assured and have few apprehensions about making presentations.

35 and 44 – You may need to add polish to those skills you have already developed.

25 and 34 – You are the vast majority of the population. You can build on the strengths you already possess and strengthen those areas in which you may be weak.

10 and 24 – You are a bit more apprehensive than most, but you are certainly not alone. Work on both developing your skills and building your self-confidence.

10 – You feel unsure of yourself and very apprehensive about giving a presentation.

*Adapted from 101 Secrets of Highly Effective Speakers, 2005.*

## Meanings of Common Gestures, Mannerisms, and Postures

The following list of common gestures, mannerisms, and postures is organized by what attitude they convey to the audience:

### A Dictatorial Approach:

- Crossed arms
- Pounding fist
- Hands on hips
- Pointing index finger
- Hands behind back
- Karate chops in the air
- Hands in a “steeple” position

### Openness:

- Open hands, palms up
- Large arm gestures
- Removing your glasses
- Moving from behind the podium or table
- Stepping off the platform
- Walking toward and into the audience
- Leaning forward on your toes or in your chair
- Hand-to-face gestures
- Unbuttoned suit coat or shirt collar, loosened tie
- Head tilted to the side

### Insecurity/Nervousness:

- Gripping the podium or audiovisual equipment
- Chewing on objects, such as pencil erasers
- Biting fingernails
- Biting lips
- Continual throat clearing
- Hands in pockets
- Hands covering mouth
- Clenched fists
- Lack of eye contact
- Jingling keys or coins in pocket
- Removing glasses and then replacing them
- Strumming fingers
- Touching ears
- Playing with hair, mustache, or beard
- Twisting rings or other jewelry
- Rocking back and forth or from side to side
- Tossing chalk, marker, or pointer in air
- Rubbing hand across forehead and through hair
- Rubbing back of neck

- Picking at imaginary or real lint on clothes

Emphasis:

- Underscoring a point on a visual aid
- Large arm movements from the shoulder
- Dramatic pauses
- Lifted eyebrows
- Head poised in reflective tilt
- Bouncing gently on toes
- Animated facial expression

Arrogance:

- Hands on lapels, hem or suit jacket
- Steepled fingers
- Preening gestures (patting hair, adjusting clothing)
- Pointing finger in lecturing fashion

Adapted from *Speak With Confidence*, 2003.