

SUMMARY

THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

DALE CARNEGIE WITH J.B. ESENWEIN



Summary of “The Art of Public Speaking” by Dale Carnegie with J.B. Esenwein

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Learn how to become a confident, effective speaker.

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Introduction

Training in public speaking is not a matter of external factors. It doesn't rely on imitating the greatest or conforming to the standards of society. Public speaking is about the man himself. It's about the message he is uttering that must be worthy of being given. Unless there is something of value within, no tips or tricks of training can perfect the delivery of a speech. Therefore, training for public speaking must begin with self-development and exploration. Similarly, no amount of rules regarding voice culture, intonation, and gesture will have meaning unless you have something to say that has the power to inspire, influence, and bring people together. At the end of the day, no one can learn *how* to speak. Instead, one must jump in and learn through experience. Experience, then, is not only the best teacher but the first and last. Through experience, we have the opportunity to supplement, correct, and justify. We then must be trained in self-knowledge and have the ability to judge ourselves by the standards we have come to believe are right. Therefore, learning the methods presented in this book will simply become secondary matters. It's the full mind and a warm heart that are primary and paramount; "for unless it be a full being that uses the methods it will be like dressing a wooden image in the clothes of a man."

Conquer Stage Fright

Many students of public speaking continuously ask, “*How can I overcome self-consciousness and the fear that paralyzes me before an audience?*”

Think about this. Why is it that some people are confident when diving into the deep end of the pool while others are hesitant, anxious, and scared? It's because of practice! You can read all the books and learn all the tips of public speaking, but if you never dive in, you'll never overcome the fear!

Being stage fright is a fear that is known to many popular public speakers, and some master-speakers never entirely overcome the fear. For example, Daniel Webster became so nervous during his first speech, that he had to take a seat before finishing it because he was so nervous. Similarly, great speakers like British statesman William Gladstone and American clergyman Henry Ward Beecher often became nervous before speeches.

So the first step in mastering the art is to become *absorbed by your subject*. If you feel deeply about your subject you will be able to think of little else. In other words, concentration allows us to distract ourselves from less important matters like how your hair and coat look while standing at the podium. Overcome your feelings of self-consciousness by simply consuming your mind with thoughts about your content. Next, it's equally important to *have something to say*. It's not simply enough to be absorbed by your subject, you must also have confidence in what you are saying. Many speakers make the mistake of approaching the podium with little preparation or previous knowledge on the subject. If you make this mistake, then you will certainly feel self-conscious, you ought to be ashamed to steal the time of your audience. Instead, prepare yourself by knowing what you're going to talk about, and how you are going to say it.

Lastly, *after preparing for success, expect it*. If you prepare for success, success will come. Of course, this doesn't mean that you should be over-confident; instead, you should practice true humility. It's not the type of humility in which you become meek and cowering, but rather a strong,

vibrant humility that opens you up for greater power of service. In fact, meek humility means that you believe that you will fail, and if you believe this, then there is no hope for you. You will fail. Instead, think of yourself as someone with infinite capabilities that you can master through practice. So while you may feel as if you are drowning at first, keep practicing and soon you'll be swimming with ease.

The Sin of Monotony

Imagine listening to the same song over and over again. After a while, the song will become overplayed and you'll get tired of the same tune, the same pitch, and the same words. Simply put, it becomes monotonous. The same can be said of the speaker who gives his speech by droning along in the same volume and pitch of tone and uses the same emphasis, speed, and thoughts. Imagine how boring it would be to listen to a speaker without variation in his her or her voice! At the end of the day, monotony is *deadly*.

Not only is monotony deadly but it also reveals our limitations. If a speaker uses only a few of his powers, it points to the fact that the rest of his powers are not developed. So how can you ensure that you don't commit the sin of monotony? The first step in giving a dynamic speech is *emphasis*. Let's take a look at the following sentence: "Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice." Speak it aloud. Which words do you emphasize? Naturally, you will emphasize *destiny* since it is the subject of the sentence. Next, you will emphasize *not* so you don't confuse your listeners into thinking destiny is a matter of chance. And of course, you'll want to emphasize *chance*, for it is one of the two big ideas in the statement and you'll want to emphasize its contrast to *choice* in the next sentence.

However, let's remember that emphasizing a word doesn't mean that you are simply speaking louder. "To yell is not a sign of earnestness, intelligence, or feeling." Sure, emphatic words may be spoken more loudly, but they may also be spoken more softly. However, the *real* quality desired is the intensity that comes from within. Therefore, changing your pitch is the first technique in creating variety and emphasizing your central message. Next, you'll want to change your pace and pause. Changing your tempo will go a long way towards establishing variety. In fact, Mr. Howard Lindsay, a Stage Manager for actress Miss Margaret Anglin, once said that a change of pace was one of the most effective tools for the actor. Naturally, we pick up the pace when delivering exciting news and slow down when

delivering important facts. And finally, you'll want to incorporate pauses for dramatic effect.

Perhaps consider pausing before delivering an important word or phrase, or rushing through the less important material in your speech before slowing down to enunciate the critical key parts. At the end of the day, it's important to remember that you shouldn't allow your movement to become too fast. This is a common mistake for many amateur speakers; instead, take your time, add variety, and use emphasis to avoid committing the monotonous deadly sin.

The Importance of Arousing Emotion

Imagine two people giving a speech on the same subject of child labor. The job of the speakers would be to inspire their audience to vote for a measure that would abolish child labor, so how does a speaker do this? They must strike at their feelings. Imagine the first person giving that speech is a white politician, someone who constantly fights for the rights of slaves. However, the other speaker is a black mother who has just seen her children sold into slavery from the auction block. Whose speech would you be more likely to listen to?

The mother did not have the technique of speaking, but she had something even greater, something more effective than reason: feeling. The best speeches in the world are charged with emotional force. That's because feelings guide us through life. They are the reason that we lie on soft beds, sit near the fireplace on cold days, eat cherry pie, and even drink lemonade on a scorching hot day. We don't do these things out of logic and reason but because they feel right. Our feelings dictate what we shall eat and generally how we should act. As Carnegie states, "Man is a feeling animal, hence the speaker's ability to arouse men to action depends almost wholly on his ability to touch their emotions."

So how can you ensure that you give your speeches with feeling? No matter the cause you're arguing or the speech you are giving, it's important to develop enthusiasm by *becoming your subject*. You must enter into the character you impersonate, the cause you advocate, or the case you argue. You must enter it so deeply that it clothes you, enthralls you, and possesses you wholly. For example, Emerson once explained that no painter could draw a tree without in some sort becoming a tree; or draw a child by merely studying the face and outlines; instead, a painter must watch the child and his motions, the same way he would enter nature to draw the tree.

This is clearly easier said than done, so what exactly does all this mean? Simply put, you must pretend that you are an actor, speaking through your

character. Transform yourself into your subject and you'll be able to inspire both emotion and action from your listeners.

The Importance of Gesticulation

Imagine the tree in your front yard. The one that is not growing how you would like it to. Every day you fertilize it, water the soil, and let the tree have its sunshine. But still, it isn't growing properly. Obviously, you can't just nail a few branches to the tree hoping that something will grow from them. Instead, it's the inside that matters. Similarly, gestures when giving speeches must be born, not built. But what exactly does this mean?

Think about this. "The speaker whose thoughts and emotions are welling within him like a mountain spring will not have much trouble making gestures, they will come from within. They will come as a natural impulse. On the other hand, those who simply tack on movements will look much similar to the tree in which you nailed on its branches, a simulation." For example, if you watch the same speaker give a speech twice, you'll notice that his gestures are different each time. That's because his gestures are based solely on his emotion, mood, and impulse. However, while gestures certainly come from the spontaneous emotion that you feel, that doesn't mean that you can't practice them.

So to avoid awkwardly gesturing throughout your speech, begin by practicing descriptive, suggestive, and typical movements until they come as naturally as good articulation. You could also try watching yourself in a mirror, noting which motions are awkward and practicing them until your gesture change becomes organic and natural. While we're on the subject, let's talk about which movements you should avoid. Do not make short, jerky movements. Instead, let your movements be easy, and come from the shoulder rather than the elbow. Of course, don't go too extreme and include too many flowing motions either.

Next, you'll want to avoid too much gesture. When we go through a major crisis in life, we rarely go through it with much action. For example, when you hear the news of your close friend's death, you don't just throw your hands up in the air and start lamenting your grief. Instead, you're likely to

go sit quietly and brood in dry-eyed silence until the shock wears off. Similarly, when giving a speech, too much gesture will seem disingenuous and distracting. So do your best to avoid unnecessary gesticulation.

You should also pay attention to the strength, poise, flexibility, and grace of your body. These are the foundations of good gesture. Practice by walking and standing before the mirror to conquer your awkwardness and if you aren't naturally graceful, practice by dancing, doing yoga, or exercising. The goal is to get grace and poise in your mind! Lastly, keep your facial expressions in mind as well and be sure that your posture and your expression match the character of your speech.

A Good Voice Comes From Good Health

A critic for *The London Times* once declared that acting is nine-tenths voice work and the same could be said for public speaking. “A rich, correctly-used voice is the greatest physical factor of persuasiveness and power...” In other words, your voice is important and has the power to move your audience. Gladstone himself once stated: “Ninety men in every hundred in the crowded professions will probably never rise above mediocrity because the training of the voice is entirely neglected and considered of no importance.” Think about that.

Of course, there are ways that you can work on your voice. The secret to a good voice is relaxation, and relaxation is the basis of ease - our first fundamental requisite for a good voice. So try this. Contract your muscles of the face and throat as you do in hate, and flame out “*I hate you!*” Now relax as you do when thinking gentle, tender thoughts, and say, “*I love you.*” How different does your voice sound? When practicing voice exercises, it’s important to never force your tones. You must ease your voice, after all, it’s a delicate instrument that must be handled with care.

So how can you practice relaxation and ease? Try this exercise: hold your arm out straight from the shoulder. Now, withdraw that power and let it fall. Next, practice relaxation for your throat muscles by letting your neck and head fall forward. Roll the upper part of your body around, with the waist acting as a pivot. Let your head fall and roll around as you shift the torso to different positions. Try not to force your head around, simply relax your neck and let gravity pull it around as your body moves.

Next, practice relaxing your throat by beginning to yawn. But instead of yawning, speak while your throat is open. This will allow you to increase your volume and enrich your tone. When completing this exercise, some notice that their tone passages are partly closed by enlarged tonsils, adenoids, or enlarged turbinate bones of the nose. If this is the case for you, then you should consult a physician.

Next, let's discuss how to carry your voice forward. You can tell whether you are placing your tone forward or not by inhaling a deep breath and singing *ah* with the mouth wide open. Try to feel the delicate sound waves strike the bony arch of your mouth just above the front teeth. It's a slight sensation, but as you practice, you'll notice the feeling of your voice striking the roof of your mouth. You can continue to practice this by holding the palm of your hand in front of your face and saying the words, *crash*, *dash*, *whirl*, and *buzz*. Can you feel the forward tone strike against your hand? Practice until you can!

Finally, you should develop the carrying power of your voice. When speaking to a big audience, it's not always necessary to speak louder so the people in the back can hear you. Instead, it's about moving your voice forward. And the very basis of this practice is your breath which comes from good health. A successful speaker once developed his voice carrying power by running across the country and practicing his speeches as he went. This exercise forced him to take deep breaths and helped develop his lung power!

You can practice by placing your hands on your waist. Take a deep breath, focusing the activity of your breath in the center of your body. Don't raise your shoulders. As the breath is taken, your hands will be forced out. Repeat this exercise by placing your hands on the small of the back and forcing them out as you inhale.

Turn Your Audience into a Crowd

When it comes to the crowd, they hold great power. While each individual may have his own special interests and needs, there is power in one common idea that unifies them: patriotism, hate, a common fear, are all popular topics that unify its individuals. You see, crowds are most susceptible to emotion, they want to feel something, but you can also unite members by the way you arrange them.

If you arrange your audience so that they are formed like a crowd, you'll be able to successfully create a mob mentality. You know the power of the mob, as John Ruskin once put it, "You can talk a mob into anything... It thinks by infection, for the most part, catching an opinion like a cold..." This means you'll be more likely to impact your audience if they are arranged like a crowd and can easily catch one another's opinions. History shows us the power of how the crowd-mind works. Think about the witch hunt in Salem, Massachusetts. People were so influenced by the mob-mentality of its citizens, that people were quick to make accusations about witches without any proof or merit.

Today, the crowd is a force to be reckoned with and we should learn how to use it to our advantage. So how can you turn your audience into a crowd? Simply by unifying the minds and needs of the audience and arousing their emotions. Their feelings, not their reasons, must be played upon. The crowd spirit cannot be created if you don't appeal to the crowd's emotions first. If you're still not convinced of the power of the crowd, let's take a look at the power of applause.

Applause in itself helps unify an audience. For example, once a crowd of people in New York were watching a moving-picture and had been applauding several songs. All of a sudden, a simple advertisement for tailored skirts was thrown up onto the screen, some started the applause, and the crowd, like sheep, blindly imitated. We also see this today at

concerts or movie theaters. If one person in the crowd begins to clap during silence, the rest of the crowd will likely follow.

At the end of the day, it's hard to kindle enthusiasm if the audience is scattered over a large seating space with empty benches that separate the speaker from his listeners. Have your audience seated compactly and you'll find that your message has the power to spread like a contagion.

The Foundation of Your Speech Relies on the Strength of Your Arguments

No matter how much practice and conviction you put into your speech, it will fail every time if you are unable to refute the arguments that many might use against you. When expressing your opinion and point-of-view, there will always be others who see the other side. So before we can become a successful arguer, we will need to think about how we can do two things: build up an argument and then tear it down. In other words, you must be able to examine the stability of the structure of your argument so that it may be supportive and sound. It's also important, however, to detect the defects in your argument so that you will be able to demolish the weaker ones of those who argue against you.

According to the author, every argument has four parts: *the question under discussion, the evidence, the reasoning, and inferences*. If you want to ensure that your argument is strong, you'll need to test your argument by analyzing these four parts. For the question under discussion, you'll first want to ask yourself, "*Is the argument clearly stated?*" This means ensuring that all the terms in the statement mean the same to each disputant. For example, the meaning of the term "*gentleman*" may not be mutually agreed upon. Next, ask yourself if your argument is stated fairly. Does it include too much or too little? Does the formulation contain a trap of some sort?

For the evidence of the argument, you must first ask yourself about the authorities and experts cited as evidence. *Is the authority well-recognized? What constitutes him as an authority? What makes him an expert on the subject? Are his opinions unbiased and clear?* Ensure that the sources cited are reliable and unprejudiced. Next, you'll want to look at the facts that you present as evidence. *Are they sufficient enough to constitute proof? Is there enough? Do they support or contradict one another?* And lastly, *are they confirmed or debatable?*

Next, let's look at the reasoning for your argument. First, ask yourself if the fact you presented might support a *different* conclusion from the one you're offering. *Have you overlooked any contradictory facts? Are the counterarguments relatively weak? Have you accepted mere opinions as facts?* Think about all the ways the facts you presented could be used against you. Lastly, take a look at the inferences. *Have you been guilty of stating a conclusion that does not follow?* This is also known as a non-sequitur. And *do all your pieces of evidence harmonize with one another?*

Remember, you don't want to simply prepare to present your own argument. You also need to prepare for all the ways in which others might be able to tear it down.

The Importance of Using Your Imagination

Creating a convincing argument is the foundation for giving a productive speech; however, simply giving a speech that is full of numbers and statistics will surely put your audience to sleep. Instead, you should employ the power of imagination. What exactly is *imagination*? According to the author, the imagination is either the faculty or the process of forming mental images. So how can you get your audience to form a mental image?

The first step in harnessing the power of imagination is learning how to use figurative language. For example, let's say you are arguing that alcoholism is the number one cause for destroying families' lives. Sure, you could stand before your audience and list off a bunch of numbers and statistics to prove your point, but what good would that do? Instead, use figurative language and create a story. Tell the story of the man who comes home drunk from the bar each day, only to yell at his wife and hit his children. Fill it with figures of speech like similes, metaphors, hyperboles, and ironies. This will likely grab the audience's attention while also keeping them interested in the rest of your speech.

Next, you can use your imagination by employing the use of *imaging in public speaking*. Begin by setting the image of your audience before you while you prepare. While you can't be prepared for every emergency, you can be more prepared by "meeting your audience" before you actually do. Imagine the mood and attitude toward the occasion as well as the theme of your speech. Next, imagine the language you will use. "Remember that an address without fresh comparisons is like a garden without blooms," so imagine the language and work on it until vividly real comparisons come to mind.

Lastly, you will want to imagine speech-delivery. Think about what you will say, how you will deliver it, and what types of gestures you might want to use. If you can picture your speech in your head, you'll be less likely to

forget something and be more likely to give a successful, convincing speech.
“All in all, master your images, let not them master you.”

Final Summary

To become a master of public speaking, you must be willing to do three things: practice, practice, practice. Simply put, practice is the only way that you will overcome your fear of public speaking and become the best. Of course, Carnegie has laid out the many tips and techniques you need to help you succeed. First, you'll want to avoid monotony by using emphasis to add variety to your speech. Next, arouse emotion from your audience and let your gestures flow from the heart. Practice your gesticulation and the projection of your voice through the many exercises Carnegie has provided. Then, you'll want to turn your audience into a crowd by placing them strategically together to help them form a mob-mentality. Lastly, you'll want to prepare for all errors by testing your arguments and using imagery to help you deliver a compelling and constructive message.



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