

## 2. SPEAK WITH SINCERITY

*In your first speech, you concentrated on actually standing before an audience and making it through a talk. Now, having “broken the ice,” you’re ready to discuss a subject of general interest about which you have strong convictions. Your purpose is to convey this sincerity and conviction to your audience, to make them understand, and possibly to join you in enthusiastic support of your viewpoint. As you prepare and deliver this talk, make an effort to confront and overcome any nervousness you may feel.*

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To convince the audience of your earnestness, sincerity, and conviction on a subject you thoroughly understand.
- To confront and control any nervousness you may have.
- TIME: Five to seven minutes.

### **SINCERITY AND CONVICTION**

The successful speech is one that radiates conviction and sincerity. The purpose of your speech – in this project, to advocate a point of view on which you feel strongly – should dominate your preparation and delivery. Your primary goal is to learn how to convey your true feelings to the audience. Be natural, but forceful; the combination of thought and strong feeling should be an expression of your personality.

Remember that since your listeners are volunteering their time to hear your talk, you owe them more than a superficial exercise in words. When a subject has meaning for you and you can convince listeners of that fact, they will pay attention to you and be willing to consider your point of view.

### **SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE**

When you speak on a subject that interests you – and about which you have strong feelings – you will become so involved with speaking, you will forget your nervousness. Remember, some stage fright is a normal reaction for any speaker. Don’t be concerned about feeling a certain amount of nervousness before you speak.

However, if excessive nervousness is a problem for you, now is the time to confront it. You don’t want to be totally calm, thus putting your audience to sleep, but you should try to understand and overcome any nervousness that creates problems for you. Direct your natural nervousness toward two objects: yourself and your topic.

First, use the nervous energy to add excitement to your talk so the audience will catch your enthusiasm and be sympathetic to your cause. Second, use your nervous energy toward thoroughly researching the topic. Your full mastery of the subject will give you confidence as you speak. Once you’ve demonstrated your understanding of the topic and stimulated enthusiasm in your audience, what’s left to be nervous about?

### **SELECTING THE SUBJECT**

Choose a subject of interest about which you have definite convictions. The world is full of controversial subjects, and you certainly have strong feelings about some of them. Your topic could be anything from taxes to education, arms control to barking dogs. Just be sure that you have a definite point of view and then prepare a protest, appeal, or call for action that promotes your viewpoint.

Your purpose should determine your choice of supporting material (fact and illustrations), the arrangement of your ideas, and your delivery. As in any speech, adapt your presentation to fit the audience, speaking directly to listeners' interests. In this talk, you may assume your audience represents the city council, chamber of commerce, the general public, or any other group. Be sure the Toastmaster of the meeting understands and makes clear to Club members what role you want them to play.

## **MAKE AN OUTLINE**

Plan your introduction to awaken your audience. Make them interested in your subject. Show its timeliness and relevance to them. The body of your talk should identify the source of your concern, show how the problem can be solved, and build listeners' understanding of and sympathy toward your position. Finally, your conclusion should leave the audience ready to support you in your convictions.

Another way of stating this progression is to tell your audience:

1. Something is wrong. State just what it is.
2. Why is this wrong? Who is to blame? What harm is done?
3. How can this wrong be corrected? Make definite recommendations for changing things for the better.
4. What should we do? Tell your listeners exactly what you want them to do, think, or feel. Let your enthusiasm peak, and show them sincerity.

## **YOU NEED TO REHEARSE**

Of course, you will need to practice, preferably with someone who will give you helpful feedback, such as your mentor. Tell that person about your speech plans, then try to win agreement as you proceed through the points of the outline. Try several different illustrations and lines of reasoning to determine the most effective and discard the rest. Think clearly about your approach to the subject, and delete everything that does not directly relate to your purpose. If you can enter into a dialogue or friendly argument with your listener, you will discover weaknesses in your position which you can then strengthen.

Become excited about your topic. You can't accomplish anything worthwhile unless you're enthusiastic about it. If you lack enthusiasm, you may have selected the wrong subject.

## **TRY IT WITHOUT NOTES**

In this project, try speaking without notes, since you will want to convey sincerity and mastery of the subject. You should be telling your listeners something you really believe, rather than reading a script to them.

Consider the effectiveness of a presentation when the speaker looks you in the eye, drops all pretense, and tells you from the heart how he feels about the subject. Compare that presentation with one in which the speaker stands stiffly behind the lectern and speaks from notes, with only an occasional glance at the audience. Which one makes the greater impact?

At this stage of your speaking development, however, you may not be quite ready to abandon notes entirely. If this is true for you, try this method as a first step away from written notes: Write in large letters so you can read each card with a quick glance. Never let your notes come between you and contact with your audience.

## **DELIVERING YOUR TALK**

Involve your listeners from the very beginning of your talk. Your first sentence should wake them up and make them want to listen. Your opening should also clearly introduce the subject.

Carry through with sincerity and finish with a strong appeal. Assume you have already sold the audience on your position; now add the finishing touches. Don't be concerned about being so involved with your subject; your Toastmasters Club is

just the place to turn yourself loose. The main consideration is to put the force of conviction into everything you say, revealing your true beliefs.

## **YOUR EVALUATION**

The evaluator will be looking for the way you project sincerity and conviction to your audience. You should also be taking steps to control any nervousness you may have.

All the skills you learn through speaking are cumulative and should be included in each successive speech. In your first talk you learned about planning (purpose, introduction, main ideas, conclusion), and in this talk you're learning the importance of sincerity (convincing your audience that you know your subject and believe what you are telling them). Plan to include both of these skills in future talks. Remember, unless you have convictions and can demonstrate them in a logical form, you have nothing to say. When you show enthusiasm skillfully, your audience will follow you.

## EVALUATION GUIDE FOR "SPEAK WITH SINCERITY"

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE TO THE EVALUATOR:* For this speech, the speaker's objectives are to convince the audience of his/her earnestness, sincerity, and conviction on a subject the speaker thoroughly understands, and to confront or control any nervousness. The speaker may use notes if necessary. In addition to your oral evaluation, please complete this evaluation form.

Check the appropriate column for each item, then add your comments, if warranted, in the space provided. Comment only on those items where special praise is deserved, or where you can offer specific suggestions for improvement.

	EXCELLENT	SATISFACTORY	SHOULD IMPROVE	COMMENTS/RECOMMENDED ACTION
Did the speech reflect adequate preparation?				
Did the speaker appear to be fully knowledgeable on the topic?				
Did the speaker convey earnestness and conviction?				
Was the speech relevant to the audience's needs and interests?				
Did the speaker appear to control nervousness?				
Did the speech follow a logical outline?				
Did the opening arouse audience interest?				
Did the body of the speech include factual support for the speaker's viewpoints?				
Did the speech conclude with a strong note of appeal?				
Did the speaker establish eye contact with the audience?				
Has the speaker improved since the previous speech?				