

Chapter 11: Final Thoughts

“When you are not practicing, remember, someone somewhere is practicing, and when you meet him he will win.”

– Charles "Ed" Macauley (1928-), former American professional basketball player

I want to close this book by giving you some general advice about how you can improve your public speaking style and technique. I have intentionally left this section for the very end of the book, because compared with the tips in the earlier chapters many of the things I will say here cannot be actioned immediately but will require a longer-term approach to implement.

Presentation excellence is never accidental! Everyone needs to work hard at developing their skills.

It is a difficult process, but public speaking is so important that careers have been advanced or derailed based on a presentation. Deals have been won or lost depending on the outcome of a presentation. Non-profits and volunteer organizations have won funding or folded up their tents depending on their performance in a presentation.

Presentations matter. And it is something very worthy of our commitment and lifelong study.

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| Tip 270: Learn from good speakers and bad speakers alike |
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| Essential |
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Stand back and learn from other speakers. You will have seen other speakers, both good and bad, and you should attempt to learn all you can from them. Perhaps the best way to become an excellent speaker yourself is to watch really good, experienced speakers and model your presentations on theirs.

Watch speakers who do it well and those who do it poorly. Analyse their content, their style, their delivery. What is it about those who do it well, that makes their presentations effective and memorable? And what is it about those who do it badly that makes them particularly memorable in a bad way?

Notice not just what they say, but what they do: how they move, how they use their voices, how they look at the audience, how they handle timing and questions.

Brainstorm the qualities of good speakers. When you find an excellent role model, work hard to emulate that person: you can't go wrong.

Compare your notes with what I have written in this book and make up your own mind of what works and what doesn't work. Decide for yourself what is useful and what is harmful.