

Chapter 8: Delivering the presentation

*“In ancient times when Cicero had finished speaking,
the people said, ‘How well he spoke,’
but when Demosthenes had finished speaking,
the people proclaimed, ‘Let us march.’”*
– Adlai Ewing Stevenson II (1900-1965), American politician

Tip 228: Relax and smile!	Essential
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When you are invited to the lectern to speak, take one long deep breath, stand up straight and walk over confidently.

When you reach the lectern and face your audience, the first thing you should do is relax and welcome them with a friendly smile. This is one important way to connect with your audience. A smile may be the single most powerful form of nonverbal communication.

Smiling and meeting your audience with a warm persona will put you in a better mood and mindset, and it will immediately have a positive effect on your audience – it will put them at ease too.

Imagine that you are meeting your best friend or spouse after a long time. Imagine how you would feel and react in that situation, and allow yourself to feel the same emotion at this moment.

Being up-tight, tense or over-formal at this point would be disastrous. It will create an unnecessary barrier between you and your guests. You are their leader for the duration of your presentation. When you are feeling relaxed and happy, they will feel relaxed and happy; when you are stressed and unhappy, they will also feel stressed and unhappy. You owe it to your audience to be totally engaged in the present... and smile.

Make eye contact with your audience and in particular, identify some friendly faces that you already know.

Standing straight and maintaining a healthy posture will make you look more comfortable and confident, and will help your voice sound richer.

Take at least one more deep breath and collect your thoughts. Pause for a moment, command their attention and then jump right into your presentation.