

## How To Successfully Deliver A Speech

In considering how best to deliver a speech, it is desirable that a speaker should have some knowledge of the people he is to address. It will be to his advantage to know something of their range of thought and their likes and dislikes. He should also know something of the occasion, such as: Who will be there? What is expected of him? How long should he speak? Will there be any other speakers? What will be the spirit of the audience?

**THE BEGINNING** The first impression made by a speaker will often determine the success or failure of his undertaking. He should assume a natural and easy standing position and begin in a quiet conversational voice. His face should be cheerful and somewhat animated, and his bearing should be modest. By modesty is not meant timidity or an attitude of subservience, for lack of self-confidence is destructive of successful effort. It means rather a sinking of self, or a merging of self into the subject in hand. Modesty is not incompatible with leadership, and a public speaker must be a leader.

**PROGRESS** There must be evidence of substantial progress being made as a speaker advances in his subject, otherwise the audience will soon become weary and disinterested. A speech should have an onward rising tendency, marked by gradually increasing volume of voice, earnestness of feeling, intensity of facial expression and greater breadth and variety of gesture. Once having secured control of his audience the speaker must keep them so to speak "in his grasp" for should he loosen his hold upon them, even for a few moments, it is doubtful if he could again gain control of them. There should be special strong points in the address, upon which the speaker has particularly prepared himself, all leading up, however, to the great climax which will close his speech.

**THE CLIMAX** In every speech there is a summit to be reached, and it is the duty of the speaker to lead his audience to it step by step. If the subject matter has been arranged in climactic order, as it should be, little difficulty should be experienced in working up the vocal climax. Here the highest powers of the speaker are brought into play, voice, gesture, facial expression and body movements, all are summoned to aid him in this final appeal. The man's soul seems on fire as he sends these last burning shafts of eloquence into the minds and hearts of his hearers.

**THE CLOSE** Frequently the climax closes the address, although a few words may be added in a quieter style should it be found desirable. These words should be very few, however, and straight to the point. They should be concise, important and dignified. Nothing is more distressing than to have a speech "flatten out" toward the end. The closing argument should be put, as Emerson says, into concrete shape, some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which the people can see and handle and carry home with them.

**GENERAL SUGGESTIONS**

1. Let your first efforts be simple.
2. Do your work under immediate inspiration.
3. Be bold, but not too bold.
4. Make up your mind to accept the risk. Failure should lead to more persistent effort.
5. Prepare twice as much matter as you intend to use. The memory is sometimes treacherous.
6. Cultivate the extempore style as soon as possible.
7. Learn to select your words and cast your sentences accurately and fluently.
8. Be natural, not artificial.
9. Enunciate, deliberately.
10. Regulate the pitch and force of your voice by talking to your farthest auditors.
11. Conceal the bones in the skeleton of your address.
12. Avoid hurry.
13. Be yourself at your best.
14. If you bow, do so from the waist, not from the neck.
15. If your audience appears cold, warm them up.
16. Cultivate concentration.
17. Never let your words overshadow your thought.
18. Better stop too soon than too late.

These suggestions, if carried out, should provide the speaker with a high-quality speech every time.

## About the Author

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