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# The Psychology of Great Presentations

## Using 20 Traits of Human Nature For Outstanding Results

**Dr Bill Robb**



## “101 Tips” - Necessary But Not Enough

- ❖ Voice – speed, tone, pitch and avoiding fillers
- ❖ Body language – eyes, stance, hands and avoiding bad habits
- ❖ Knowing your audience – how many, seniority, knowledge, gender and culture
- ❖ Preparing the talk logic, main ideas, cards and rehearsal
- ❖ Checking the venue – location, travel time, lectern, microphone equipment, noise and light



# Human Traits Blocking Your Objectives

- ❖ Without fully knowing it, presenters are striving to overcome 20 human traits
- ❖ Some are in ourselves as presenters
- ❖ Some are in members of the audience
- ❖ Knowing these traits leads to a better presentation preparation and delivery
- ❖ Using the traits will overcome many of audience members' objections and resistance



# First: Human Traits in Presenters





# 1.

## Unsure Of Why We Do Things

Get absolutely clear why you are giving the talk

- ❖ What do you want from the audience?
- ❖ What do you want from the organisers?
- ❖ Do you want people to do anything?



## 2.

# Being Focussed Too Much On What We Want

- ❖ What problem or issue made someone think this talk was needed?
- ❖ What does the audience want – why did they decide to attend?
- ❖ Why me in particular?



### 3. Ignoring Our “Self-Talk”

- ❖ Listen more to your “second mind”
- ❖ Register the “alarms” and do something to correct the situation
- ❖ Notice audience reactions and use them





## 4.

# Eagerness to Tell - Forgetting People Already Know Something

- ❖ Think in terms of sharing not lecturing
- ❖ Find ways to show people what they know and then concentrate on applications to life or job
- ❖ Be interactive – ask questions, get them to do something



## 5.

# Uncomfortable With Silences

- ❖ Get comfortable with short silences
- ❖ Speak only at the speaking point
- ❖ Wait for quiet before beginning
- ❖ Use pauses in your talk
- ❖ Do not answer your own questions
- ❖ Use the “seven-second-waiting” principle for volunteers/answers



## 6.

# Trusting People and Things Too Much

- ❖ Get to the venue early - double check - everything
- ❖ Have back-ups/spares
- ❖ Get things to your liking – stop if need be
- ❖ If on your own, avoid computerised equipment
- ❖ If you must use it, ask for someone to assist you



## **Second: Human Traits Influencing the Audience**



## 7.

# “I Already Know This”

- ❖ Check level of knowledge
- ❖ Do not bore with theory and lengthy description
- ❖ Get to the point – the application – what you want them to do – even if it is to think





## 8.

# “I Can’t Take All This In”

- ❖ Give minimum information needed to achieve your objective
- ❖ One main message -five supporting sub-messages
- ❖ Talk for only 80% (or even less) of the time allotted
- ❖ Not more than five slides (do you need any?)
- ❖ Link to previous speaker and link each idea to the next
- ❖ Use words they’ll understand



## 9. “Does This Speaker Really Understand Me – My “Pain/Joy”

Find out their “pain/joy”, plan accordingly and acknowledge

- ❖ Happy/sad
- ❖ Angry/ relaxed
- ❖ Fresh/exhausted
- ❖ Awake/sleepy
- ❖ For /against
- ❖ Eager/ couldn't be bothered



## 10.

### “What’s In It For Me?”

- ❖ How long will this take?
- ❖ Will this help me personally or someone I know?
- ❖ Will this help me in my job?
- ❖ Will I enjoy this?
- ❖ How much will this cost in money, time and effort?

**Build answers into your presentation**



## 11.

# “Who Is This ? Why Is He/She Here?”

- ❖ Where is he/she from?
- ❖ What is that accent/anything else that may distract?
- ❖ Is he/she qualified to give this talk?
- ❖ Why is he/she giving this talk (what’s the motive)?
- ❖ What is his/her connection with me, my organisation and the topic?



## 12.

# “Am I Going To Be Embarrassed?”

- ❖ Will he/she do anything hurt me?
- ❖ Will I be asked questions/ to do anything?
- ❖ Will I be able to cope with what’s said/suggested?
- ❖ Will I be told off or belittled?





## 13.

### “Do I Really Like This Speaker?”

- ❖ Find reasons to respect and really like the attendees
- ❖ Thank and genuinely praise something - anything
- ❖ Be self-deprecating (no superiority)
- ❖ Become one with them - “we/us” not “you/your”. Use their “buzz words”, pressing issues, beliefs and mission
- ❖ Offer practical and helpful advice
- ❖ Avoid mocking – “lazy”, “uncommitted”, “silly”
- ❖ Be firm but let people "off the hook" a bit



## 14.

# “Can I Trust This Speaker?”

- ❖ Give privileged information and/or what you think
- ❖ Credit others
- ❖ Acknowledge legitimate criticism
- ❖ No negative criticism of others not there
- ❖ Apologise for disrespect
- ❖ Try not to be a “clever-ass”
- ❖ If you don’t know, say so and commit to finding out



## 15.

# “Is This Going To Be Interesting?”

- ❖ Start with a controversial, dilemma-type rhetorical question
- ❖ Give amazing or unusual facts
- ❖ Make a strong statement of your views or a view you'll oppose
- ❖ Explain clearly what's in it for them



## 16.

# “What Does That Mean In Real Life?”

- ❖ Translate numbers into everyday mind pictures
- ❖ Tell word pictures (stories)
- ❖ Show photographs, diagrams, drawings and graphs
- ❖ Give something to circulate and touch
- ❖ NO complex diagrams/models unless absolutely necessary





## 17.

# “What is This? What is That?”

- ❖ Keep everything as concise and simple as possible
- ❖ Think about all the questions people will have – about everything
- ❖ Rehearse and ask colleagues for questions
- ❖ Answer the questions without them being asked
- ❖ Engineer questions
- ❖ Allow 20% of allotted time to questions





## 18. “I Want My View/Experiences Heard”

- ❖ Make it as easy as possible to ask questions
- ❖ Give mini-exercises – even with a large audience
- ❖ Allow 20% of allotted time for questions
- ❖ Ask for the questioner’s main question
- ❖ Let questioners answer their own questions
- ❖ Be brief – allow many people to ask questions



## 19. “I Am Unhappy in My Job/Life”

- ❖ Pre-empt by explaining what you won't be covering
- ❖ Research emotive issues or “trouble-makers”
- ❖ Ask for clarification
- ❖ Express understanding. *“I see what you mean”*. *“I understand why you feel that way”*
- ❖ Allow an interruption to finish and then continue
- ❖ Don't get upset or argue, but do not accept abuse
- ❖ Worst case – get chair's or audience's support



## 20.

# “What Were the Main Messages Again?”

- ❖ Save the conclusion for after questions
- ❖ Thank, praise and give credit - again
- ❖ Final positive powerful message
- ❖ Thank, praise and give credit - again
- ❖ Ask them to do what you want them to do



## From Now On?

Of course, speak/perform competently

But from now on.....

**Think in terms of “*How shall I deal with the 20 human traits?*” Time devoted to this will give an exceptional presentation in terms of style and results achieved.**

**All Success For Your Next Presentation!**