

## KAREN KALISH

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*Your brain starts working the moment you're born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.*

Anonymous

Steps for Preparation (in this order):

1. Define the objective-what you want them to know + what they want to know—25 words or less.
2. Learn about your audience.
3. Organize the body of your speech into three or four points.
4. Include examples, anecdotes, analogies or stories to illustrate each point.
5. Remember you are writing for the EAR, not the Eye
6. Write the opening - it could be a:
  - \* Preview of what speech is about
  - \* Startling or important statement, fact or statistic
  - \* Relevant, personal anecdote, experience or human interest story
  - \* Rhetorical or challenging question or one that involves the audienceNo jokes unless you're funny and the joke is relevant.  
You have only 30 seconds to two minutes to grab your audience.
7. Write the closing - it could be a:
  - \* Summary
  - \* Call to action
  - \* Prediction of the future
  - \* Rhetorical question, perhaps the same one you began with**Don't forget total eye contact for the opening and the closing.**
8. Write transitions from point to point, such as:  
We've talked about \_\_\_\_, now let's turn to... ; Let me shift gears ....
9. Write out the entire speech
  - \* Write like you talk -- short, easy-to-pronounce words, short 20-word sentences – writing for the ear not the eye.
  - \* Occasionally use phrases like, "What this means to you is..." - WIIFM.
  - \* Limit your use of numbers (use lots of zeroes and visuals if necessary)
  - \* The ideal length is 15-20 minutes + 10 minutes for Q&A.
10. Prepare any visual aids/PowerPoint after the speech is written, never before.

### **DO NOT READ YOUR SPEECH**

11. Use Four Foolproof Steps to Practicing
  - \* Read speech aloud, make corrections, mark the text with pauses and emphases
  - \* Practice into a mirror using a stopwatch and a tape recorder; play back.
  - \* Reduce your speech to phrases; practice in front of the mirror again on audiotape; play back.
  - \* Give speech before a camcorder and play back with an honest "coach."

## QUESTION and ANSWER:

Practice by making a list of questions (including the toughest ones you can think of) and having someone ask them of you.

It is very effective to put the Q and A segment after the third point and before you end the speech.

## RULES FOR Q & A

- Take questions from the whole audience
- Repeat all questions, repeat positive questions as asked; rephrase negative questions positively or neutralize them
- Don't announce the last question, or ask if you've answered the question or ask if there are any more questions - just transition to the closing when you're ready.
- If you don't know an answer, say so, promise to get it - and do.
- Don't keep your eye just on the questioner – look at the whole audience with the response
- Don't answer hypothetical questions – say, “You've asked ‘what if’ – let me tell you ‘what is’ and repeat a main point of your speech
- If you get multiple questions, choose one, answer it and move on
- To people who cite unidentified sources, ask irrelevant questions, or ask disorganized questions..., say “that's a good point, we have other questions to get to, come on up afterwards and we'll discuss it”, then change your posture and take a question from the other side of the room. Most of the time, they won't come up.

## APPEARANCE

Don't wear (do or say) anything that distracts from your message.

Women: Strong color suit or dress with sleeves (limit pastels), moderate heels, no heavy makeup or noisy, dangling jewelry; hair combed and off your face.

Men: Dark blue/gray suit or sport coat, long sleeve white shirt, red or maroon conservative (boring) tie, above calf socks, shined shoes.

Gesture a lot. It:

- lets off nervous energy
- makes you more engaging to watch
- makes your voice more interesting
- helps you illustrate certain words and phrases.

Added tips:

- Write your own introduction instead of sending your bio, cv or resume that is too often read to the audience.

Make it 6-8 sentences (each 20 words or fewer) - the first 3-4 sentences open the door to the speech, the last 3-4 sentences establish your credibility. Send it to the introducer and take a copy with you.

- Arrive early to: check the room, any equipment you requested and yourself in a mirror, and to meet people in the audience.

- If possible, give out handouts after your speech so you don't talk to the tops of heads.

- READ your audience...not your speech. If they are attentive - you're doing a great job. If they are sleeping, looking at their watches, the ceiling or floor, you must either intensify your eye contact, involve the audience, or cut to the end and exit.

If you're on a panel:

- Before the presentation, talk with the other panelists to determine what each will say, the order of speaking, and where each will sit/stand during delivery and the Q and A.
- Observe the time limit
- Don't be shy. If you have answers to questions posed to other panelists, volunteer your response when they are through
- Address the audience, not the other panel members.
- Make sure you (and the other panelists) have water.

Expect and Accept some Nervousness and Fear.

Everything that was wet turns dry, like your throat; and everything that was dry turns wet, like the palms of your hands. Fear adds excitement. Unless there is at least a bit of fear present, your speech will be flat, dull, and lack energy. Don't fight it or try to make it go away. You can't and it won't.

*If you hate your speech, the audience will hate it, too.*

*If you are uncomfortable, the audience will be, too.*

*If you're bored, they'll go to sleep.*

*If you like your audience, they'll like you.*

*Enjoy yourself and they'll enjoy themselves.*

Speaking is not getting rid of the butterflies – it's getting them to fly in formation.

Act like there is nowhere else in the world you would rather be. If you don't enjoy it and get turned on by your subject, your audience certainly won't. If you have to, fake it 'til you make it.

NOTES

**Write here a 25-word or less sentence that explains what your speech is about.**

This is your objective - i.e. what you want the audience to know...do...think after your speech. Every sentence in your speech should relate to this sentence. If you're not clear what your objective is, your audience never will be.

## **OUTLINE FOR WRITING A SPEECH**

Open: 2-3 minutes

Transition

Body: 15-16 minutes

1. Point

Example(s)

Transition

2. Point

Example(s)

Transition

3. Point

Example(s)

Transition-"I've given you a lot of information...I want to hear what's on your mind..."

Question and Answer Segment

Transition

Close: 2 minutes