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## Effective Surrogate Speaking

### **Summary**

When you address an audience on behalf of the Congressional candidate you are supporting, you become the surrogate for your candidate.

We suggest that you keep the following key points in mind as you speak on behalf of the candidate you are trying to help get elected:

1. Know your audience. Frame the conversation.
2. Start with asking.... people's concerns...their health care stories.
3. Prepare your notes in advance
4. Choose three main points on which you will focus and organize your notes point by point
5. Time your talk and ....
6. As you speak, pause and...
7. Be an engaged, encouraging listener. Demonstrate that you hear what your audience tells you.
8. After you've listened begin to tie the stories from the audience with your three main points, each of which should reflect your Congressional candidate's health care platform.
9. As you wrap up restate your three main points tying each of them to support of your Congressional candidate

As her or his surrogate, you face the challenge of framing the conversation in a way that is helpful for the Congressional candidate you supports. As the speaker, you have a built-in advantage; but to succeed in getting potential votes, you needs

to start by listening to the frame or perspective, in the form of health stories, of members of the audience.

“State your vision clearly so that it becomes the thesis of your talk; a clearly stated vision is essential to the success of your effort to win votes for the candidate you are fighting for.

Almost all public speaking has at least one and often all three of the following purposes:

- To inform
- To persuade
- To entertain.

At a minimum, effective surrogate speaking should persuade and entertain your audience. Hopefully, it will also inform them. To succeed, you as the speaker must listen carefully to your audience members’ efforts to inform and persuade **you!** You need to be ready, in a very positive, listening manner, to tell your own local health care stories that support your Congressional candidate’s narrative.

You need to be familiar with the Congressional candidate’s position on health care.

You need to know your audience and know their level of knowledge. All will have stories about their own health care experiences; if you speak to a hospital group, each and every person will believe that she or he has significant understanding and/or knowledge of the health care system.

Time your talk and don’t make it long. Start by asking what are people’s concerns and questions. Be a good listener and demonstrate respectful listening. Try to understand their framework. Listen to their stories and concerns. You must knit together these concerns to the points that you hope to make; careful listening is crucial to connecting with the audience and being heard.

After you’ve listened to health care stories from the audience and reflected back with your own local health care stories, try to distill the connecting stories into three main points.

As you speak, pause and stress the points you would like your audience members to remember and carry with them.

(Prepare your notes in advance;. Use 3x5 cards if you prefer but certainly have your notes easily accessible and organized by health care story and/or one of three main points that you want to get across.)

As you wrap up the overall meeting, make every effort to link local health care stories into a restatement of your three main points. AND connect them to your stated vision! Your three main points are parts of your vision. You are building an argument in support of your candidate. The vision is the thesis of your argument. Each of the three points is one section of your support. The stories and concerns you will have heard and gathered from your audience constitute the specific details that should build a persuasive argument in support of your candidate.

## **Issues to Keep in Mind when Speaking**

**Adapted from Richard Zeoli**

**<https://www.amanet.org/training/articles/seven-principles-of-effective-public-speaking.aspx>**

### **1. Perception: Stop trying to be a great “public” speaker.**

People want to listen to someone who is interesting, relaxed, and comfortable. Most people will have never heard from a health professional – who is not a professional politician. Think of it as a conversation between you and the audience. If you can carry on a relaxed conversation with one or two people, you can give a great speech. Whether your audience consists of two people or two thousand and whether you’re talking about the latest medical breakthrough or what you did today at work, be yourself; talk directly to people and make a connection with them.

### **2. Perfection: When you make a mistake, no one cares but you.**

Even the most accomplished public speaker will make a mistake at some point. Just keep in mind that you’ll notice more than anyone in your audience. The most important thing a speaker can do after making a mistake is to keep going. Don’t stop. Because “to err is human,” a mistake can actually work for you (this is NOT clinical practice)

### **3. Visualization: If you can see it, you can speak it.**

Winners in all aspects of life have this in common: they practice visualization to achieve their goals. Sales people envision themselves closing the deal; imagine yourself in the work that you love to do. The same is true in public speaking. The

best way to fight anxiety and to become a more comfortable speaker is to practice in the one place where no one else can see you—your mind. If you visualize on a consistent basis, your mind will become used to the prospect of speaking in public, and pretty soon you'll conquer most feelings of anxiety.

#### **4. Discipline: Practice makes perfectly good.**

Your goal is not to be a perfect public speaker. There is no such thing.

#### **5. Description: Make it personal.**

Whatever the topic, audiences respond best when speakers personalize their communication. Take every opportunity to put a face on the facts of your presentation. People like to hear about other people's experiences—the triumphs, tragedies, and everyday humorous anecdotes that make up their lives. Tell stories about the patients you've served..

#### **6. Inspiration: Speak to serve.**

For a twist that is sure to take much of the fear out of public speaking, take the focus off of yourself and shift it to your audience.

#### **7. Anticipation: Always leave 'em wanting more.**

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned from my years of communication training is that when it comes to public speaking, less is usually more. I don't think I've ever left a gathering and heard someone say, "I wish that speaker had spoken longer." On the other hand, I imagine that you probably can't count the times that you've thought, "I'm glad that speech is over. It seemed to go on forever!" So surprise your audience. Always make your presentation just a bit shorter than anticipated. If you've followed the first six principles outlined here you already have their attention and interest, and it's better to leave your listeners wishing you had spoken for just a few more minutes than squirming in their seats waiting for your speech finally to end.

#### **8. Silence your distracters**

9. **Filler words** and phrases like, "um," "ah," "you know," etc. quickly become distracting to those you want to engage. Break the habit of using filler words as quickly as possible. Instead, fill the space with silence—even if it means speaking in fragments. As you relax and improve, shorten the moments of silence—eventually you can eliminate them entirely

### **10 Powerful Body Language Tips**

**Adapted from Carol Kinsey Goman, PhD**

[https://www.amanet.org/training/articles/10-powerful-body-language-tips.aspx#about\\_author](https://www.amanet.org/training/articles/10-powerful-body-language-tips.aspx#about_author)

The effective use of body language plays a key role in communication

### **1. To increase participation, look like you're listening**

If you want people to speak up, don't multitask while they do. Avoid the temptation to check your text messages, check your watch, or check out how the other participants are reacting. Instead, focus on those who are speaking by turning your head and torso to face them directly and by making eye contact. Leaning forward, nodding, and tilting your head are other nonverbal ways to show you're engaged and paying attention. It's important to hear people. It's just as important to make sure they know you are listening.

### **2. To encourage collaboration, remove barriers**

Physical obstructions are especially detrimental to collaborative efforts. Take away anything that blocks your view or forms a barrier between you and the rest of the team. Even during a coffee break, be aware that you may create a barrier by holding your cup and saucer in a way that seems deliberately to block your body or distance you from others. A senior executive told me he could evaluate his team's comfort by how high they held their coffee cups. It was his observation that the more insecure individuals felt, the higher they held their coffee. People with their hands held at waist level were more comfortable than those with hands chest high.

### **3. To connect instantly with someone, shake hands**

Touch is the most primitive and powerful nonverbal cue. Touching someone on the arm, hand, or shoulder for as little as 1/40 of a second creates a human bond. In the workplace, physical touch and warmth are established through the handshaking tradition, and this tactile contact makes a lasting and positive impression. A study on handshakes by the Income Center for Trade Shows showed that people are two times more likely to remember you if you shake hands with them. The trade show researchers also found that people react to those with whom they shake hands by being more open and friendly.

#### **4. To stimulate good feelings, smile**

A genuine smile not only stimulates your own sense of well-being, it also tells those around you that you are approachable, cooperative, and trustworthy. A genuine smile comes on slowly, crinkles the eyes, lights up the face, and fades away slowly. Most importantly, smiling directly influences how other people respond to you. When you smile at someone, they almost always smile in return. And, because facial expressions trigger corresponding feelings, the smile you get back actually changes that person's emotional state in a positive way.

#### **5. To show agreement, mirror expressions and postures**

When clients or business colleagues unconsciously imitate your body language, it's their way of nonverbally saying that they like or agree with you. When you mirror other people with intent, it can be an important part of building rapport and nurturing feelings of mutuality. Mirroring starts by observing a person's facial and body gestures and then subtly letting your body take on similar expressions and postures. Doing so will make the other person feel understood and accepted.

#### **6. To improve your speech, use your hands**

Brain imaging has shown that a region called Broca's area, which is important for speech production, is active not only when we're talking, but when we wave our hands. Since gesture is integrally linked to speech, gesturing as we talk can actually power up our thinking.

Whenever I encourage executives and others to incorporate gestures into their deliveries, I consistently find that their verbal content improves. Experiment with this and you'll find that the physical act of gesturing helps you form clearer thoughts and speak in tighter sentences with more declarative language.

#### **7. To learn the truth, watch people's feet**

When people try to control their body language, they focus primarily on facial expressions, body postures, and hand/arm gestures. Since the legs and feet are left unrehearsed, they are also where the truth can most often be found. Under stress, people will often display nervousness and anxiety through increased foot movements. Feet will fidget, shuffle, and wind around each other or around the furniture. Feet will stretch and curl to relieve tension, or even kick out in a miniaturized attempt to run away. Studies show that observers have greater success

judging a person's real emotional state when they can see the entire body. You may not know it, but instinctively you've been reacting to foot gestures all your life.

### **8. To sound authoritative, keep your voice down**

Before a speech or important telephone call, allow your voice to relax into its optimal pitch (a technique I learned from a speech therapist) by keeping your lips together and making the sounds "um hum, um hum, um hum." Watch that your voice doesn't rise at the ends of sentences as if you are asking a question or seeking approval. Instead, when stating your opinion, use the authoritative arc, in which your voice starts on one note, rises in pitch through the sentence and drops back down at the end.

### **9. To improve your memory, uncross your arms and legs**

Body language researchers Allan and Barbara Pease report a fascinating finding from one of their studies: When a group of volunteers attended a lecture and sat with unfolded arms and legs, they remembered 38% more than a group that attended the same lecture and sat with folded arms and legs. To improve your retention, uncross your arms and legs. If you see your audience exhibiting defensive body language, change tactics, take a break, or get them to move—and don't try to persuade them until their bodies open up.