

Speech Qualities: Part 6

V. Conclusion Appropriate and Effective

What you say last is often remembered first. Therefore, the conclusion of the talk is often the most important part. The conclusion should draw into sharp focus the principal points and drive home the theme with finality.

1. Directly relates to theme of talk
 - Review information in sections J and K.
2. Summarizes main points and application
 - Provides audience with the basic important information that they may apply in their own work.

W. Conclusion of Proper Length

The clock (or moderators) should not determine the length of the conclusion, though this is all too common. A conclusion is of proper length if it accomplishes its purpose within the allotted time. Therefore, the length is largely determined by the results. A conclusion should not catch the audience by surprise or unawares. The words used should point obviously to the end of the talk, and they should also have a note of finality. What you say and how you say it should end your discussion. Beginning speakers should stick with simple, direct and positive conclusions.

X. Timing

The importance of proper timing cannot be understated, and each part of a talk deserves attention with regard to timing. The key to proper timing is **thorough preparation**. The effects of improper timing can be devastating on a presentation. The audience often “turns off”, becomes fidgety and annoyed. It is particularly rude to other speakers. Often the conclusion, which is so important to the overall impact of the talk, is cut short or glossed over.

The most common reason for running overtime is too much material. Make notes in the margins of your outline to indicate how much should have been covered when half the time is left, or when the conclusion should begin. Achieving proper overall timing requires that the introduction be of appropriate length, and that each of the key points is developed in proper proportion, and that sufficient time is left for the conclusion.

Y. Confidence and Poise

Poise means ease and dignity of manner, and balance and stability of carriage as in bearing of the body and head. A poised speaker is a relaxed speaker, calm, composed, and confident because of thorough preparation and control. Overconfidence manifested by swaggering, strutting, slouching and over casual presentation on the other hand should be avoided. Diligent effort, and knowledge of why they are lacking, will result in confidence

and poise. Typically speakers lack poise and confidence because they lack of preparation, they have a negative attitude toward their qualifications as a speaker, or both.

Commonly the nervousness associated with lack of poise and confidence are manifest either physically or vocally.

1. Poise manifest in controlled physical bearing

- Lack of poise evidenced by such behavior as:
 - Hands clasped behind back, held rigidly at side or tightly clutching speaker stand
 - Hands repeatedly in and out of pockets
 - Buttoning and unbuttoning a coat
 - Hands aimlessly moving to the face or eyeglasses
 - Incomplete gestures, toying with a watch, ring, pencil, notes, etc.

2. Poise shown by controlled voice

- Vocal evidence of nervousness includes:
 - High pitch
 - Trembling in voice
 - Repeated clearing of throat
 - Unusual thinness of tone due to tense vocal apparatus

Do not hurry, be relaxed and happy to share the information you have prepared. Learn to be poised and controlled in your daily speech. That will go far toward improving your confidence and poise on the speakers platform.

Z. Personal Appearance

Good personal appearance contributes significantly to confidence and poise, and improves your credibility.

1. Proper attire and grooming

- Avoid extremes. They detract from the message by focussing attention on you.

2. Proper posture

- Again, avoid extremes of rigidity, or slouching. Stand squarely on both feet and do not lean on the speaker's stand.

3. Neat equipment

- Be sure that your slides, overheads, etc. are in proper order and orientation.

4. No inappropriate facial expressions or gestures

- Again, avoid extremes. If you are confident, poised and well prepared your facial expressions will show this and put your audience at ease.