



...newsletter

November 1, 2007

2, 4, 6, 8 - What do you Communicate?

It's not that communication is important – it's just that communication is everything.

One of my favourite courses to run is a two day workshop in "Presenting Powerfully" where participants begin to become aware of what they may or may not be communicating when doing a presentation. The course is full of very powerful cutting edge tools from NLP and individuals learn how to use them elegantly in any important communication. This enables them to give lively effective and interesting presentations. Here are some tips to help you improve your presentation skills:



It's not what you say

How aware are you of your body language, your vocal style and your 'presence' (that vague quality also known as 'charm' or 'charisma')? Studies from both Britain and America show that we tend to base our judgement of other people on three main characteristics:

- **Verbal content = 7%**
- **Vocal tone and interest = 38%**
- **Visuals and body language = 55%**

The exact percentages can vary slightly from situation to situation. What is shown quite clearly here is that at least 90% of your public image depends on what you look like and the sound of your voice and has nothing to do with the words you use. So 93% of any communication has nothing to do with the words.

Now isn't that interesting!

Relying on words alone won't do it because words mean different things to different people.

It's the way that you say it

Not only do we pay close attention to 'non-verbal' signals but at an unconscious level we also have clear ideas about what these signals mean.

How well do you know your own voice, for example where in your body does it come from? Is it high up in the body i.e. throat or neck. Is it coming from somewhere in the middle of the body or is it coming from lower down? Do you speak quickly, slowly or at a medium pace? Do you have an extensive range of tones and inflections which make your voice interesting to listen to, or (be honest) do you talk in a monotone?

Ask a friend to help you identify where your voice comes from and practice

getting your voice down into your stomach area. Practice, practice and practice until it feels comfortable. When you stand up to do a presentation, take a moment to imagine pushing your voice down into your stomach area. In your mind's eye visualise yourself as a tree, your toes are the roots that are growing longer, longer and going down, down into the soil. When you begin to feel yourself really rooted, solid and strong, that is the moment to start talking.

If a person speaks slowly and in a lower than average tone he is widely perceived as being powerful and credible. Someone with a faster, higher toned voice can be seen as enthusiastic but lightweight. Indeed research shows that we tend to decide whether or not we trust someone simply by the sound or tone of their voice. **Now, isn't that interesting.**

What about body language? Here too you might be saying a lot more about yourself without realising it. A person whose gestures are few and far between is seen as being powerful, deliberate and intelligent. The person who makes frequent, expansive gestures may be seen as frivolous and irritating.

Remember – If your overall personal style is incongruent i.e. your visuals, words and tonality don't match up, the audience will base their impression of you on that 93% non-verbal content, no matter how clever, logical and reasonable the verbal content may be.

As Freud says, *"We leak information from every pore"*.

One of the best examples of this phenomenon at work must be the pre election debate between John F Kennedy and Richard M Nixon when the two men were competing for the post of President of the USA in 1960.

Those people who only heard the debate on radio had to rely on the verbal content and vocal signals to guide their perceptions. Most people in this group regarded Nixon as the better candidate.

Of the people who saw the debate on television and who received verbal content and the vocal signals, and saw the body language of the two speakers, the majority perceived John F Kennedy as being the far more credible candidate.

It is a simple fact of history that it was Nixon who had the policies, and Kennedy who won the presidency.

The presenter who can create rapport with her audience is operating on both the conscious and the subconscious levels. At its best the effect can be quite magical. The good news is that there is nothing 'magical' about it. It is a skill which almost anyone can master with a little time and effort.

Sincerely,

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