



MANNER OF
— SPEAKING —

50 Public Speaking Tips

John Zimmer

www.mannerofspeaking.org

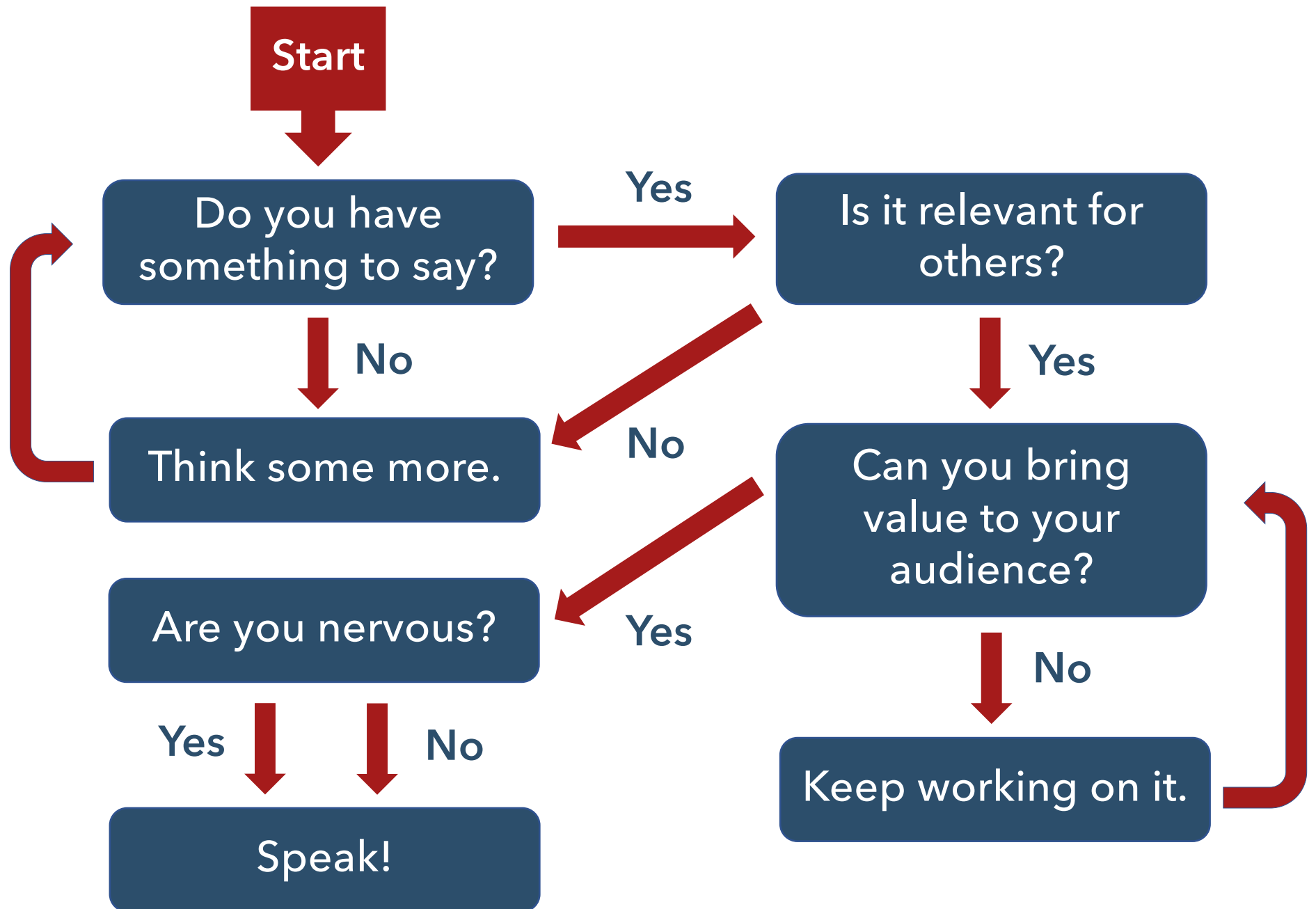
Hello to all public speakers!



This booklet contains 50 bite-sized infographics, each packed with a nugget or two of advice to boost your public speaking skills. From Aristotle to storytelling, from delivery to slide presentations, you'll find something useful here whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting your public speaking journey.

You may copy and share this booklet—for free—with anyone. In fact, I'd love it if you shared it far and wide, but please don't make any changes to its contents or format. All rights reserved.

– John Zimmer



We want to hear what you have to say.



When you speak in public,
think like a **"PRO"**

P

Privilege

People are giving
you their time.

R

Responsibility

You must give those people
value for their time.

O

Opportunity

You can impact lives.

When you speak in public, you have a **privilege**, a **responsibility** and an **opportunity**.

Respect all three. Think like a "PRO".





Five lessons from **Steve Jobs** that will benefit any presenter

To design something well, you must understand it well.

Customers pay us to sweat the details so that it's easy for them.

Focus means saying no to a lot of other ideas.

Simple can be harder than complex, but it's worth it.

Be a yardstick of quality.





Public speaking as
many imagine it



Public speaking
as it really is





Box Breathing

Hold for 4
seconds



Inhale
through the
nose for 4
seconds



Exhale
through the
mouth for 4
seconds



Benefits

- Stress reduction
- Better concentration
- Emotional regulation
- Anxiety management
- Increased mindfulness
- Cognitive performance

Pause for 4
seconds



Start



Think carefully about the **three** key relationships in all of your speeches and presentations





Have you prepared?

"All battles are won before they are fought."

Sun Tzu



"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."

Alexander Graham Bell



"I never won a fight in the ring; I always won in preparation."

Muhammad Ali



"One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation."

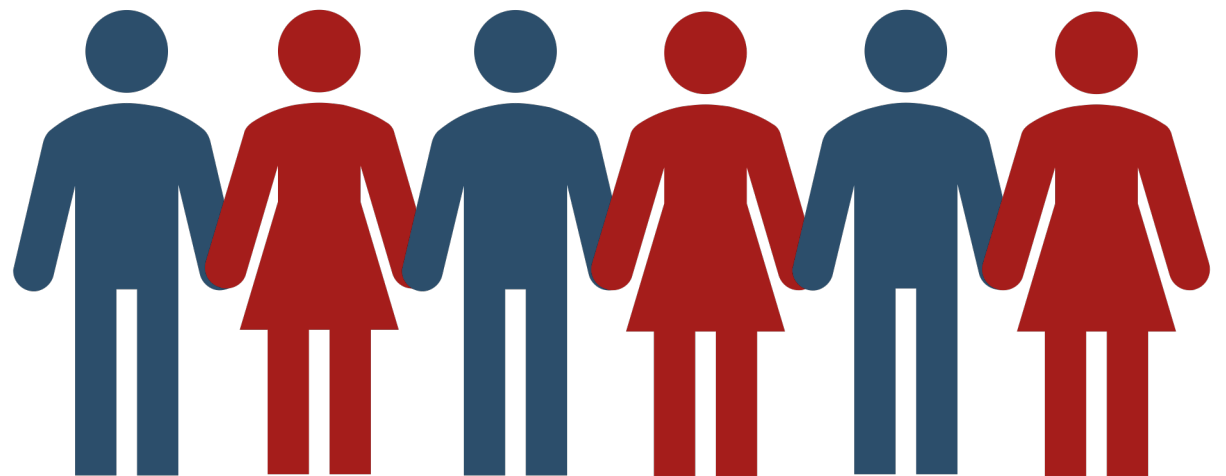
Arthur Ashe





What I want
to talk about.

Why should
we care?



If you can't answer the question, you have a **problem!**



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Your presentation is a **love letter** to your audience

Designing a presentation without the audience in mind is like writing a love letter and addressing it:

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"

– Ken Haemer
Former Presentation Manager, AT&T



12 reasons to arrive **early** for your speaking engagement



Meet host



Set up room



Meet technician



Get drinking water



Set up laptop



Locate washroom



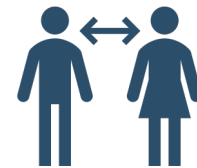
Check sound



Check notes



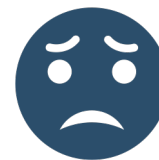
Check lighting



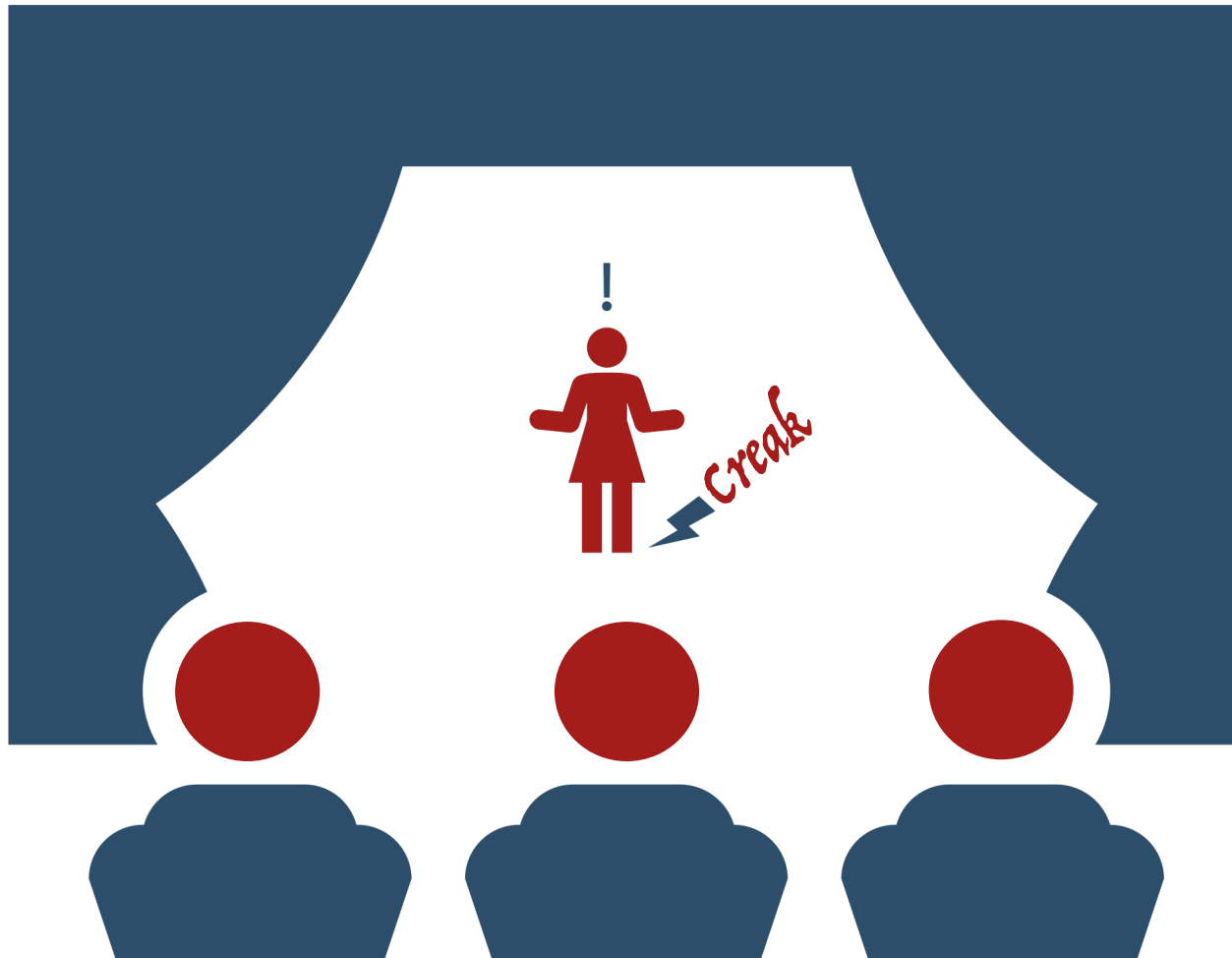
Meet early arrivals



Adjust temperature



Avoid stress



- Arrive early and walk the stage.
- Mark creaky spots with tape.
- Avoid the tape when speaking.
- The audience will not see the tape.



Things that speakers should **not** wear on stage





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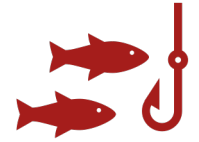
Sawubona

A Zulu greeting which means, "I see you. I see you as a whole person, with strengths and weaknesses and passions just like me. You have dignity and you have my respect. I value our time together. I see you."

Whenever you speak – to one person or an audience of thousands – practise *Sawubona*.



Hook your audience from the start



Question

When was the last time ... ?
Have you ever ... ?

Reflection

Imagine ...
Remember ...

Bold Statement

In the next 60 minutes you will learn ...
I will share three powerful techniques ...

Interesting Fact

On this day in 1867 ...
According to the United Nations ...

Quote

At his inauguration, Nelson Mandela said ...
My grandmother always told me ...

Story

Three years ago, I lost my job ...
When I was 17, I learned a lesson ...



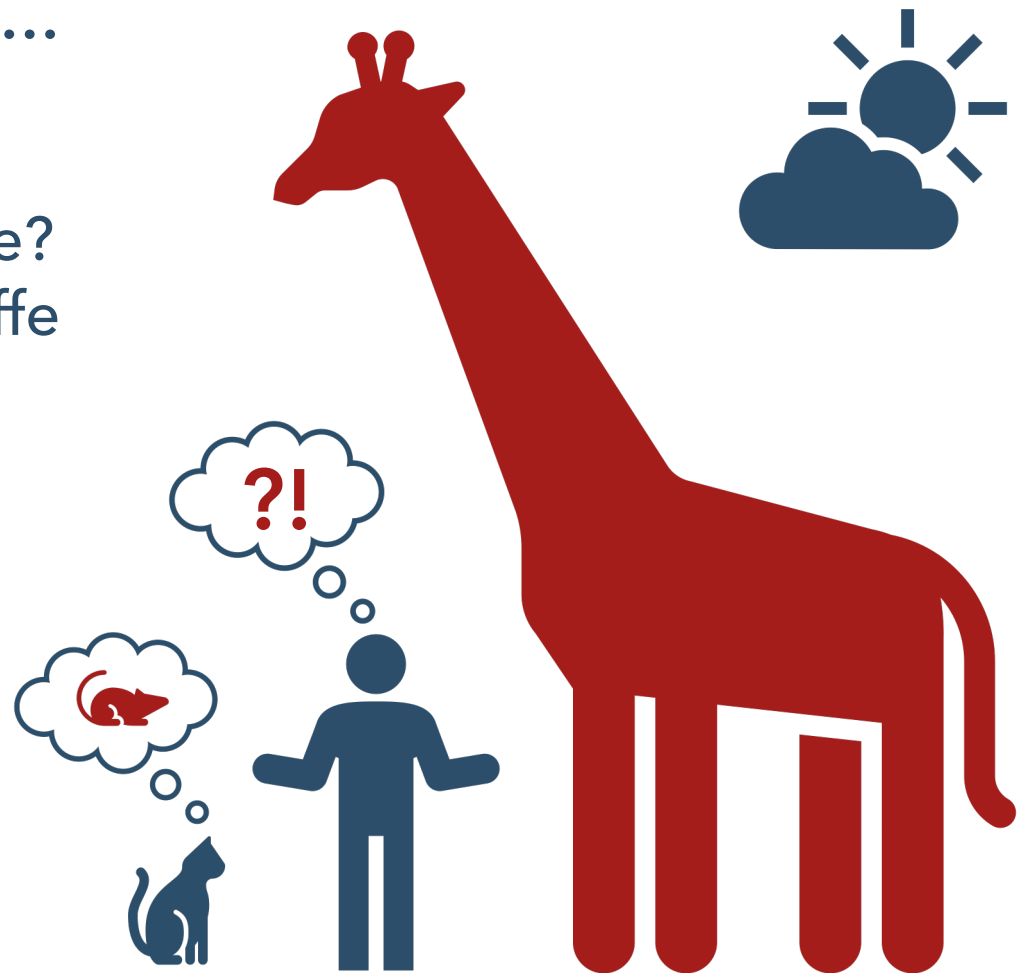
You open your front door and see a **giraffe**.

Your first questions **will not** be ...

- How tall is this giraffe?
- How many spots does it have?
- How long does it take a giraffe to swallow?

Your first questions **will** be ...

- What's a giraffe doing here?
- How did it get here?
- Is it dangerous?



When you speak in public, your audience needs to know **what** you are talking about, and **why**, before you dive into the details.

The brain wants **meaning before detail**.



Munich's 535-year-old cathedral, the *Frauenkirche*, would not be the same with only one of its two towers.

A good speech has the two towers of **content** and **delivery**. Without both, it's less effective and much less beautiful.



How much content should I have in my presentation?

Too much



Just right



Less is more. Merry Christmas!





To grab attention, add **contrast** to your presentations 

Content

Problem — Solution

Past — Present

Present — Future

Pros — Cons

Risk — Reward

Struggle — Success

Villain — Hero

Old — New

Unity — Diversity

Gestures

Left — Right

Up — Down

Open — Closed

Forward — Back

Voice

Loud — Soft

High — Low

Fast — Slow

Speak — Pause

Emotions

Sadness — Joy

Doubt — Certainty

Fear — Courage

Suspicion — Trust

Despair — Hope

Visuals

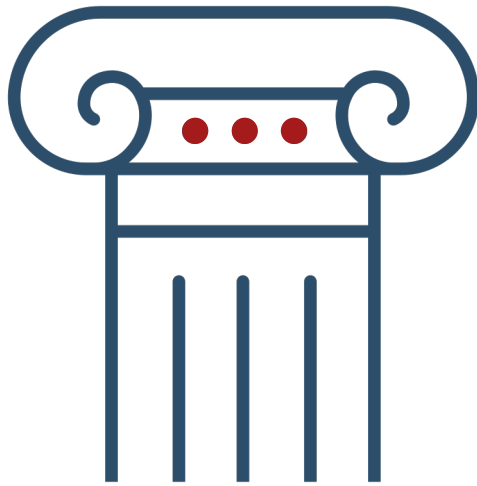
Light — Dark

Random — Orderly

Slide — No slide

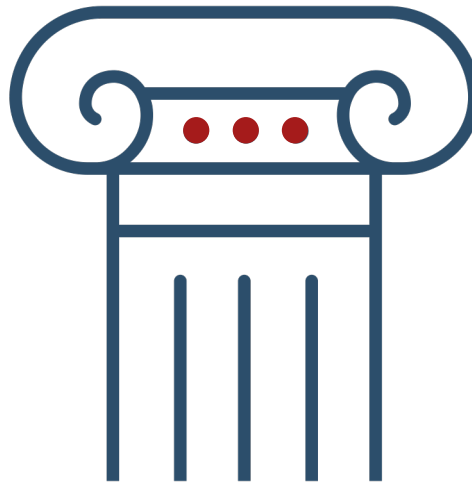


Logos



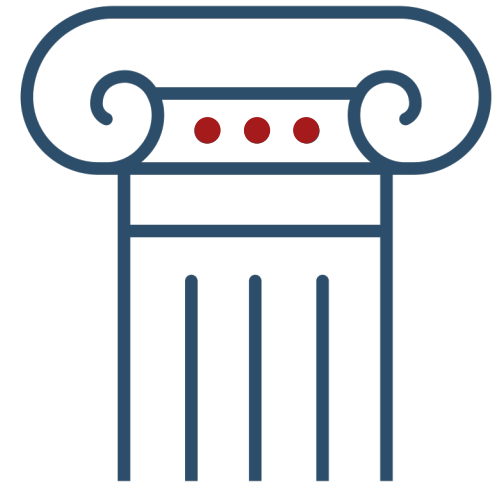
Logic: coherence, structure, facts, data, statistics, test results, research, graphs, reasoning

Ethos



Credibility: authority, reputation, expertise, integrity, credentials, stage presence, confidence, trustworthiness

Pathos



Emotion: humour, vulnerability, metaphor, surprise, images, storytelling, appeal to shared values



"The modes of persuasion are the only true constituents of rhetoric; everything else is merely accessory."

– Aristotle



Simplicity



Unexpectedness



Concreteness



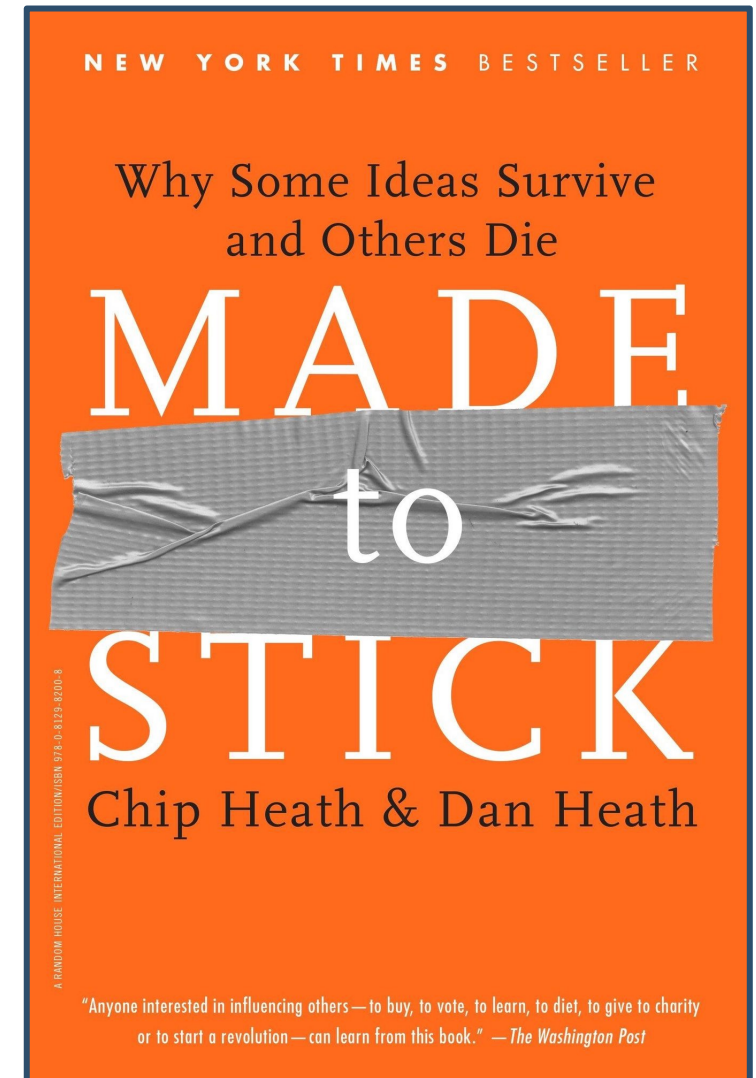
Credibility



Emotion



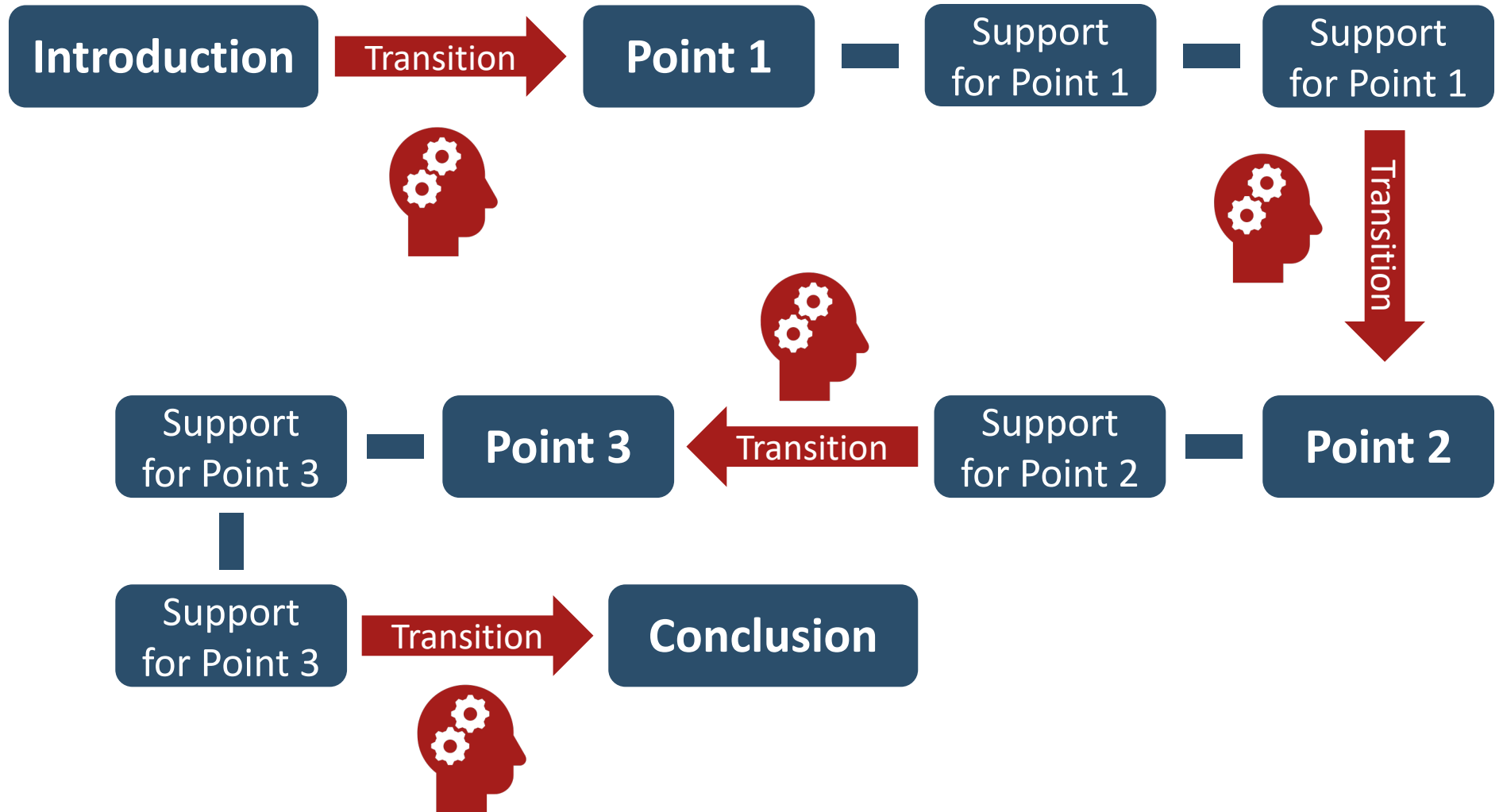
Story



*My favourite book on public speaking (and it's not even about public speaking).



Transitions in a presentation



Transitions make up a tiny part of your presentation, but they are **critical**. They allow your audience to process the point that you just covered, and to “shift gears” to get ready for the next point.

Don't forget the transitions!



Dynamite transitions in a team presentation



Topic

What will the next speaker talk about?

Name

What is the name of the next speaker?

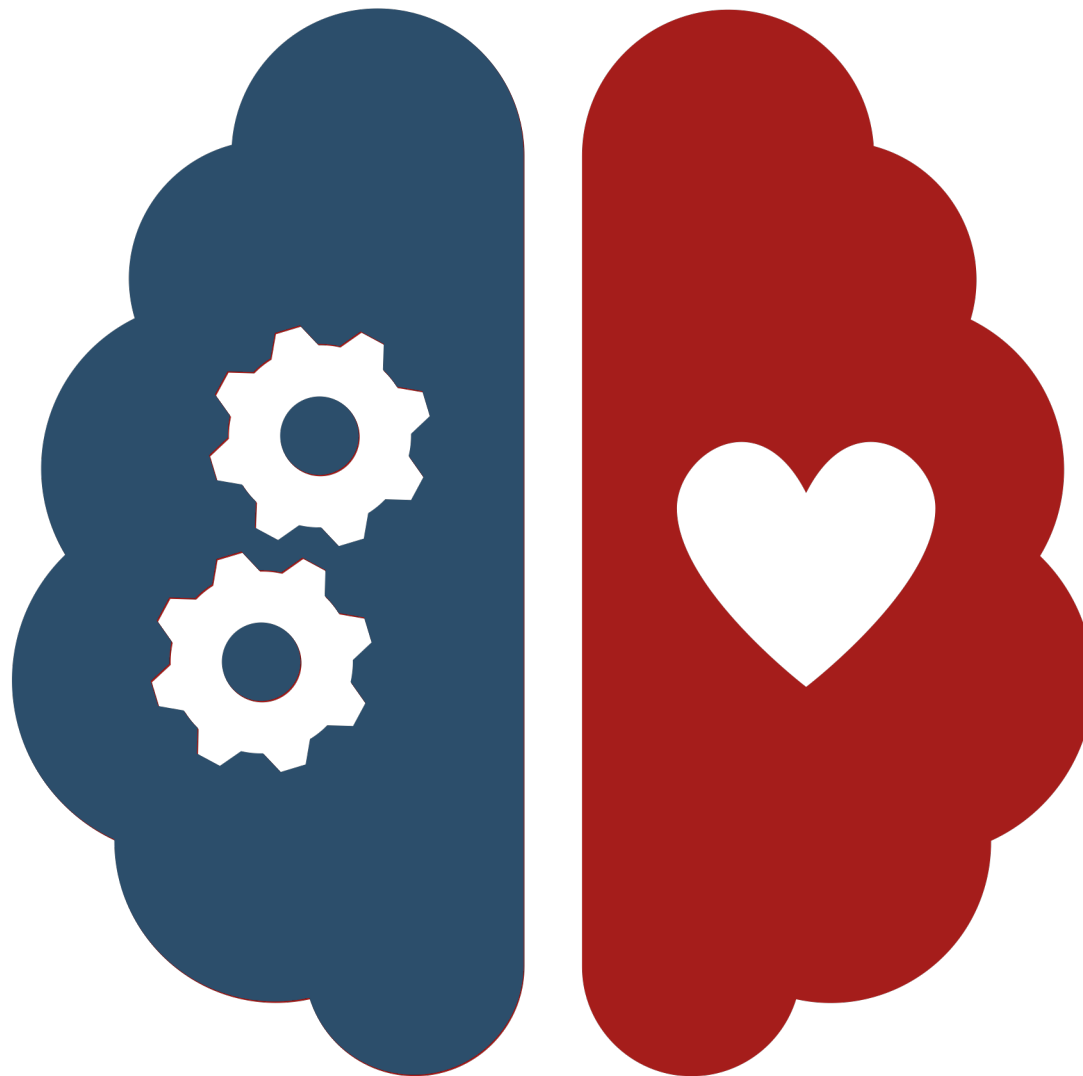
Title

What position does the next speaker hold?

- If you are in a team presentation, always introduce the next speaker.
- Use the **TNT Method**: Briefly state the topic to be covered, the speaker's name, and the speaker's title.
- You can vary the order, but you must state all three.
- **Example**: "I now pass the microphone to Sofia, our Chief Technology Officer. She'll give an overview of our strategy to incorporate AI in our website and our software."



People have a **logical** side and an **emotional** side.



Speak to **both**.



Puts the audience
at ease



Creates a bond
with the audience



Energizes the
audience



Lightens the
emotional load



Helps the audience
remember key points



Leaves a good
impression



The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell (simplified)





Truth to the Teller

The speaker must feel something for the story. That's why personal stories are so powerful.

Truth to the Audience

There must be something in the story that audience members can take and apply in their own lives.

The Four Truths of the Storyteller

Truth to the Moment

Great storytellers never tell the same story twice. They tailor their stories to each audience and each situation.

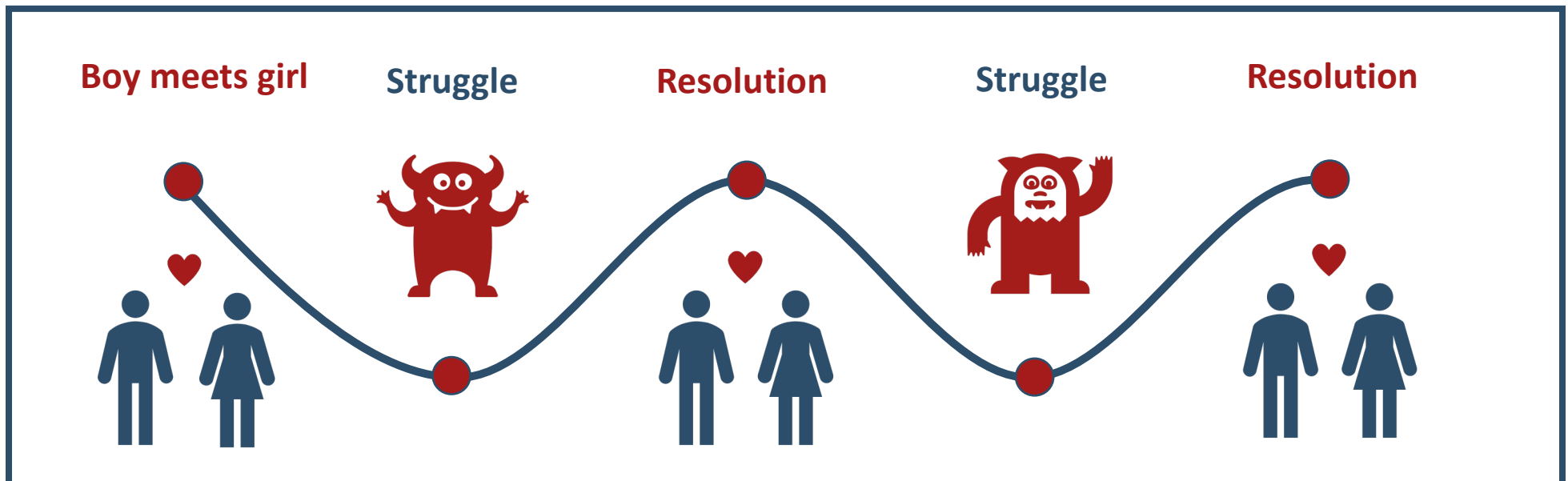
Truth to the Mission

The story should inspire the audience to believe in, and strive for, a worthy objective.

From "The Four Truths of the Storyteller" by Peter Guber, *Harvard Business Review*, 2007



Which story do you want to hear?



The best stories have an **arc** with struggle and resolution.

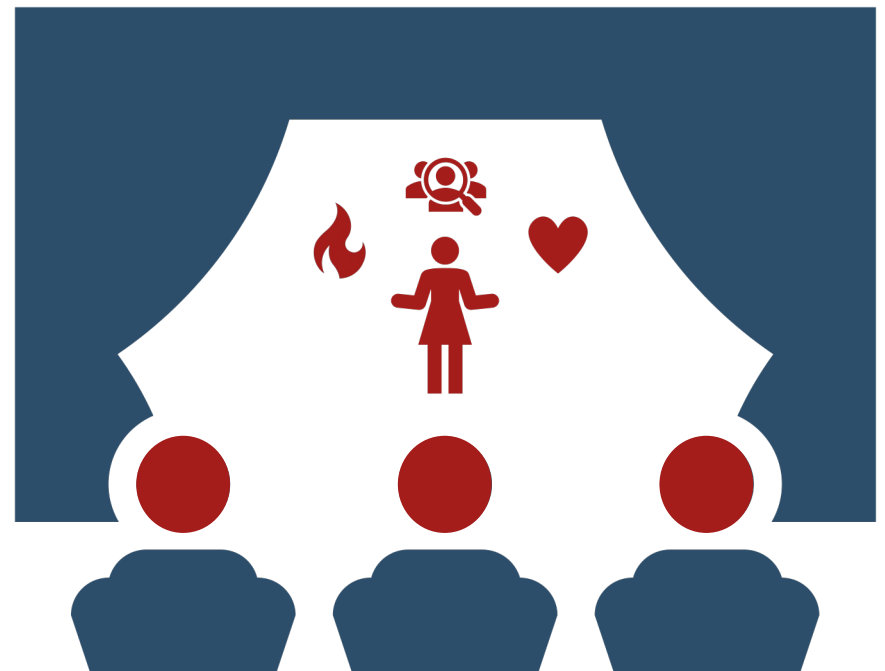


When you speak, where is your focus?



Does my hair look OK?
Where do I put my hands?
Should I have worn a tie?
Will I catch my train?
Why is that guy on his phone?
Does the audience like me?
Did I leave the iron on?

My audience.
My message.





How do **you** speak?

Vague and meaningless

“We all need to make an extra effort to use blue sky thinking and leverage the low-hanging fruit and interdepartmental synergies* within our company.”

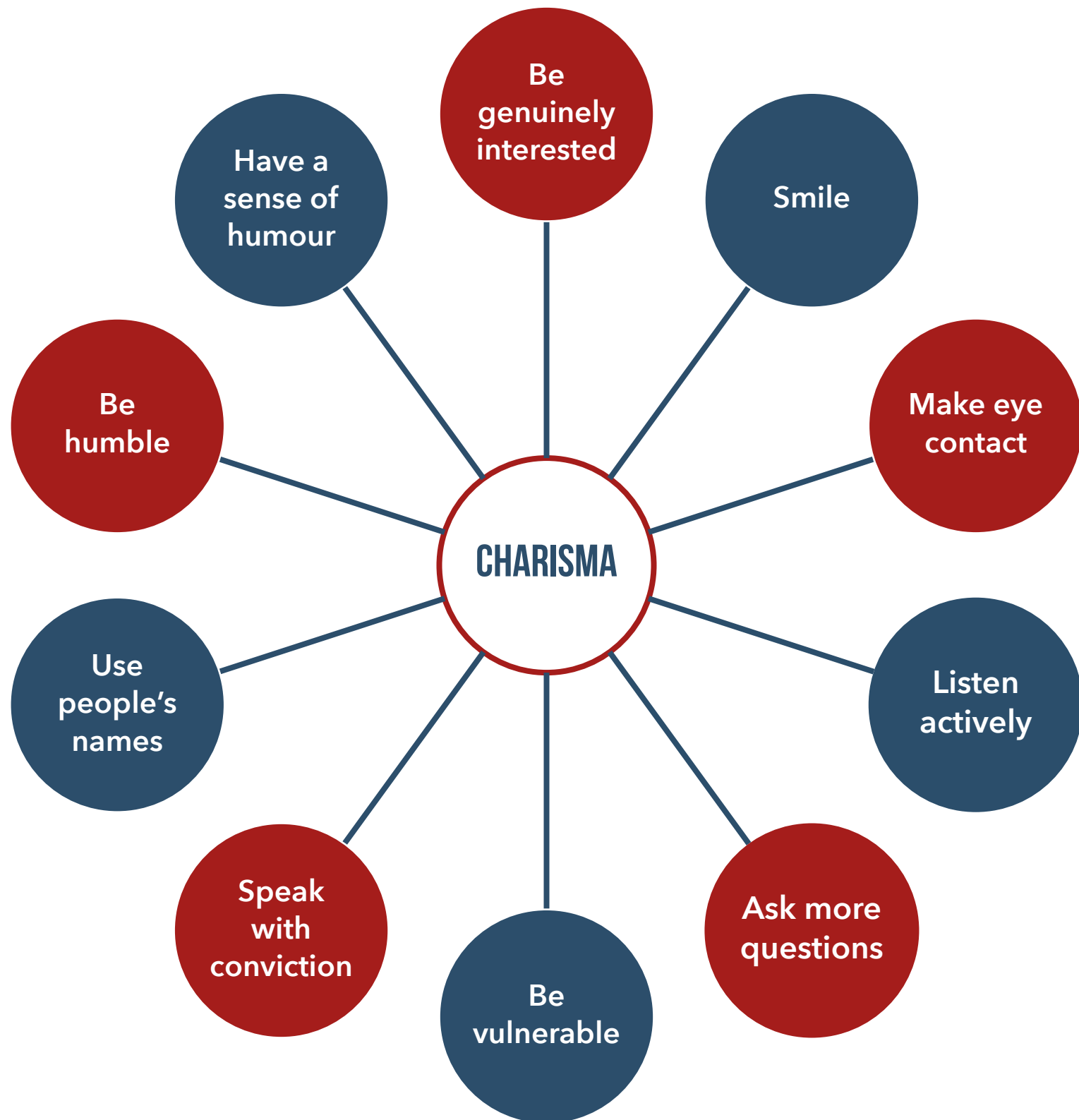


Clear and concrete

“Salespeople, send your monthly sales figures to Accounting by the 5th of the following month so that Accounting can promptly invoice our customers.”



* “Synergy” is my least favourite word in the English language. “Leverage” is a close second. They are perfectly good words that have been bastardized by the modern business world.





They're **not** the same thing!



Microsoft created PowerPoint and Word for a reason.

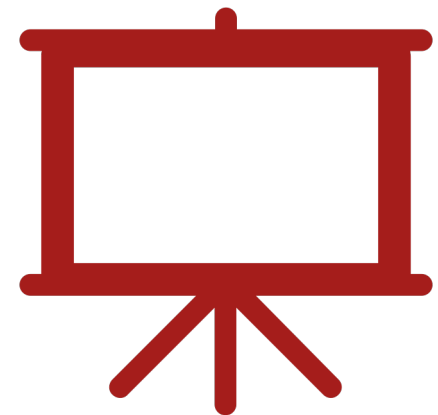
They serve **different** purposes!

You cannot create a single document that is effective both on the screen and as a comprehensive takeaway.

Instead, create simple, clear slides in PowerPoint **and** a detailed takeaway document in Word.

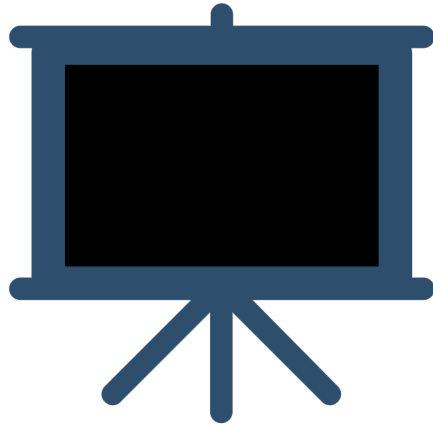


People should be able to understand your slide in **3-4 seconds**. Just like a sign on the highway.

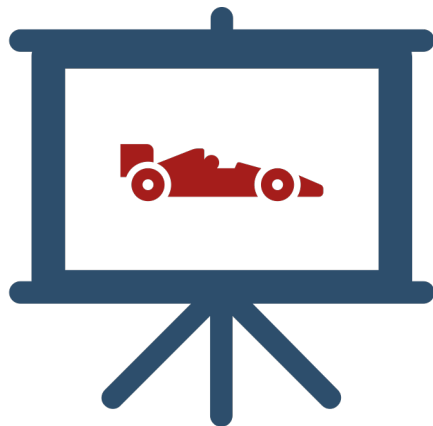




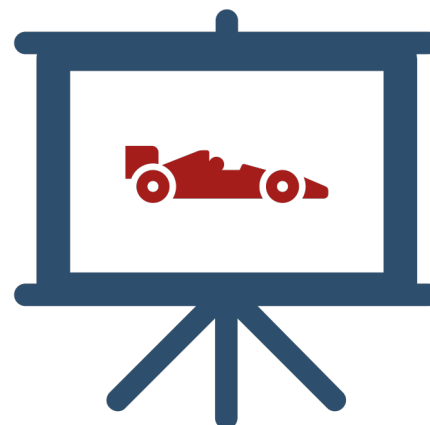
Three **different** ways to use a title slide



1. Start speaking with the screen black. At an appropriate moment, click into the title slide.



2. Go straight into the content. At an appropriate moment, click into the title slide.




3. Skip the title slide and go straight into the content. (NB: You still must say what your talk is about.)



Stop using these final slides!



- If you want to thank your audience, say “Thank you.” 
- If you want to take questions, ask for questions.
- Your final slide is too important. Here are better options:
 - A summary of your key points
 - An amazing image related to your talk
 - A call to action
 - Your logo and contact details



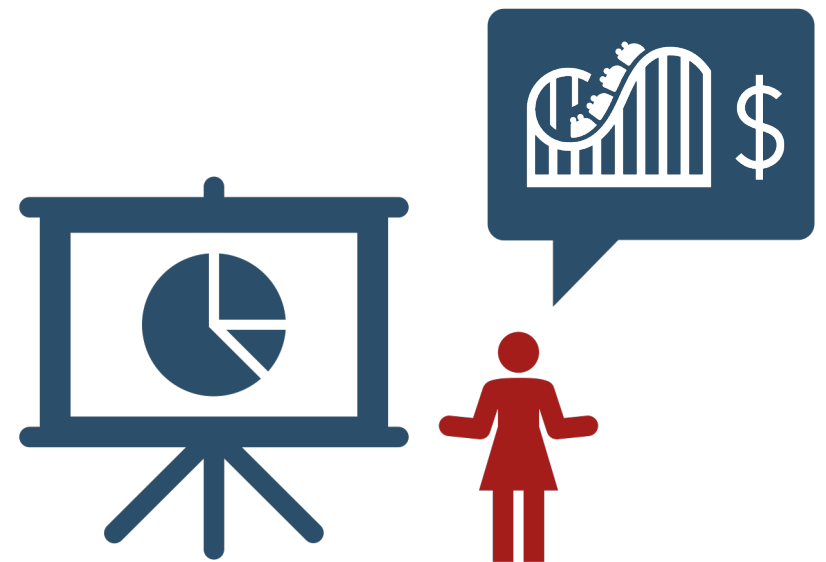
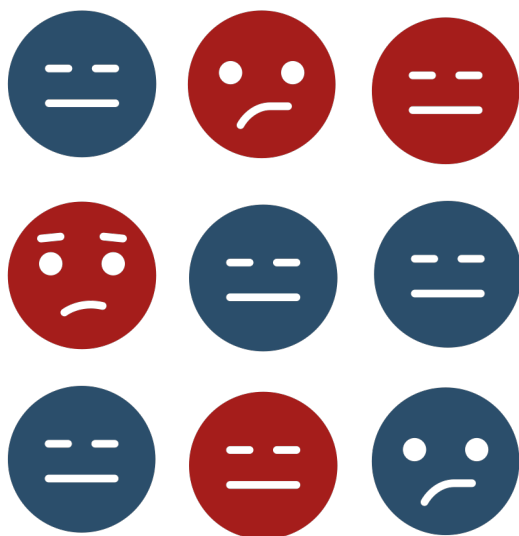
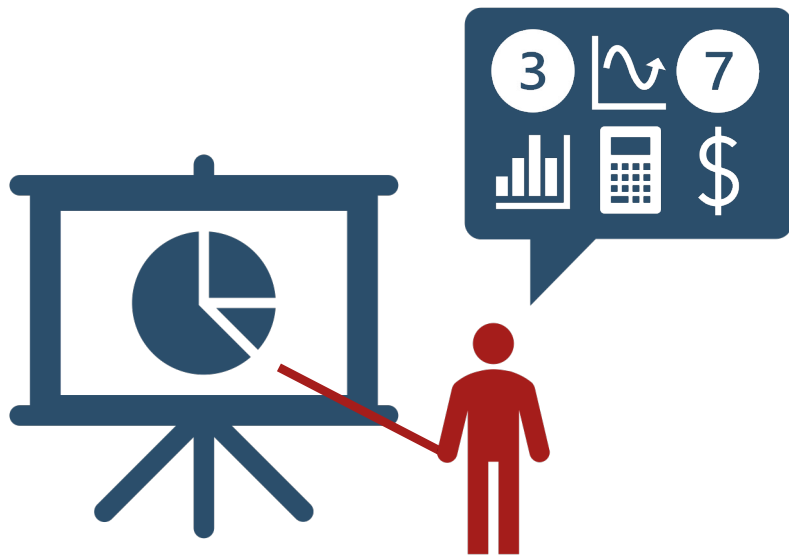
Use a black slide when you want to:

- **Give the audience a break**
- **Refocus attention on you**
- **Signal a change in topic**
- **Do an exercise**
- **Tell a story**
- **Take questions**

Black slides are the most important slides in your presentation. Use them!

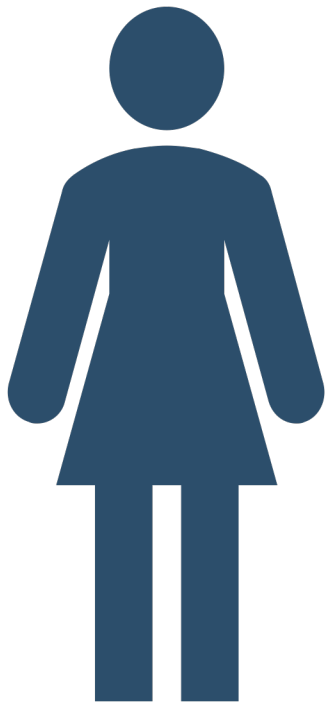


"No one ever made a decision because of a number. They need a story." – Daniel Kahneman





If your voice is monotone, your audience will **flatline**.





Improve your vocal variety.
Read **out loud** to children.



I read the first five books in the *Harry Potter* series to my two daughters when they were little.

With different voices for each character!

That's **2,297** pages, **717,040** words, **60+** hours, a **fantastic** way to improve vocal variety, and a **magical** time with my kids.*

*By the time Books 6 and 7 came out, the girls were old enough to read them on their own!



You create anticipation



The audience has time to think



You have time to breathe (and think)



You reduce filler words



You look calm and poised



You connect with the audience





When to pause

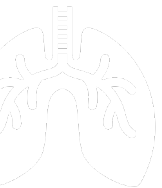
Before you start speaking

To signal that something important is coming



To let what you just said sink in

When transitioning to a new topic



After asking the audience to think about, or imagine, a situation

To reflect on a question that has been asked





I

You

We

The speaker's:

- values
- experience
- influences
- opinions
- advice
- background
- successes
- failures
- struggles
- expertise
- passions

The audience's:

- goals
- challenges
- needs
- hopes
- fears
- motivation
- ambitions
- potential
- responsibility
- interests
- beliefs

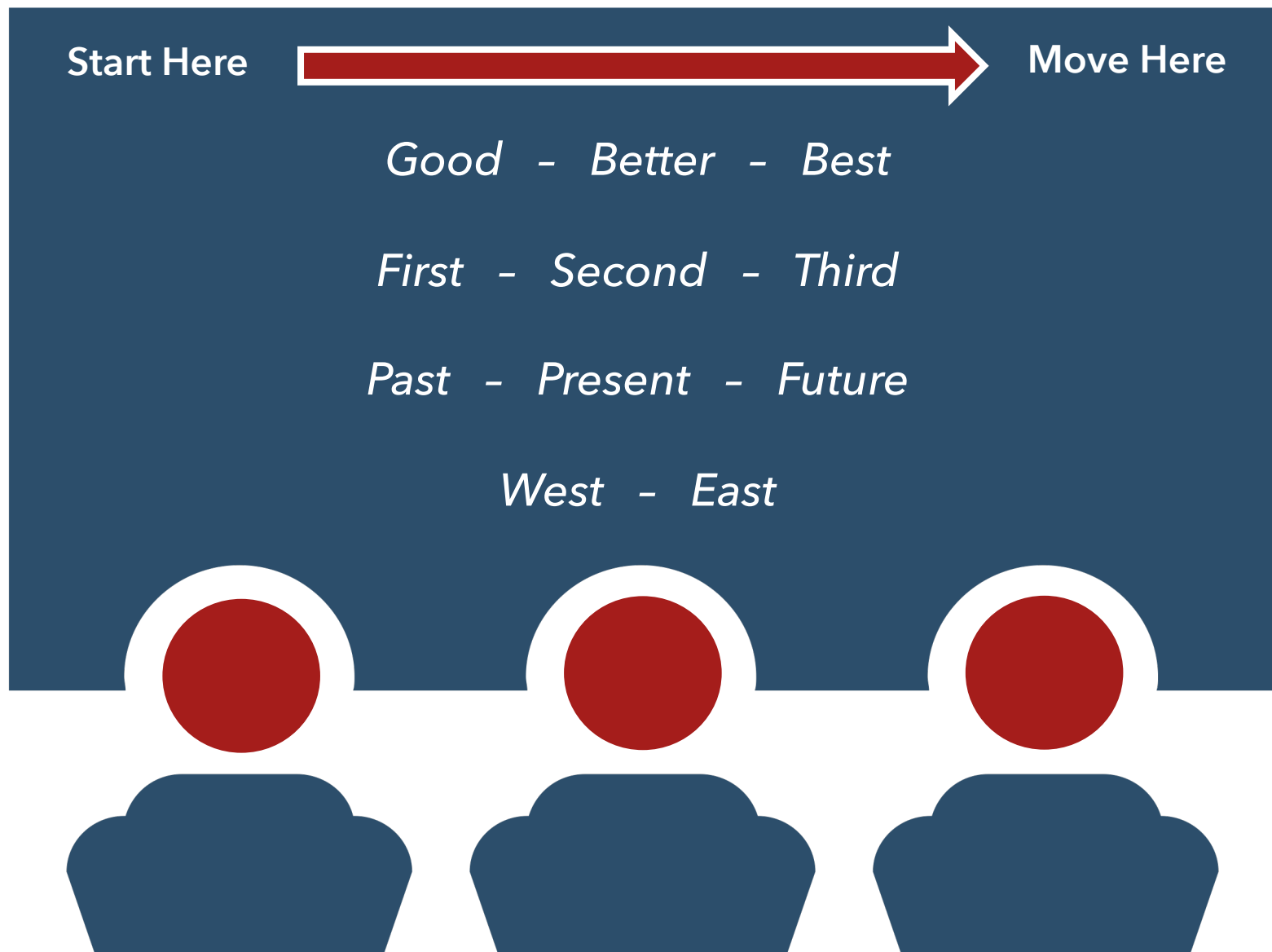
Our shared:

- values
- beliefs
- history
- concerns
- interests
- duties
- challenges
- concerns
- goals
- commitments
- aspirations



When gesturing, do it from the audience's perspective

Most languages are written left to right.* But your left is the audience's right. So, for certain gestures, start on your right and move to your left so that the audience sees it correctly.



*Notable exceptions: Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, Urdu



“There is **one** thing we need to focus on ...”

“Today, I recognize the work of **two** individuals ...”

“There are **three** reasons to approve the plan ...”

“Opening a new office has **four** benefits ...”

“We got our first **five**-star rating ...”





Technical tips for online presentations

- Stability is essential
- Good WiFi and/or an Ethernet cable
- Charged computer plugged in socket

CONNECTION



- Quality microphone set the right distance from your mouth
- Good speakers
- RØDE NT-USB Mini*

MICROPHONE



- High-resolution webcam
- Set at eye level
- Logitech C922 Pro Stream*

CAMERA



- Good lighting from the front, not from the back
- Yonguo YN300 Air (2)* and Geekoto Studio Softbox (1)*

LIGHTING



- Clean and simple
- Supports your brand
- Virtual backgrounds only if professional looking

BACKGROUND



- Be able to use the features (chat, polls, screen sharing, breakout rooms, etc.) smoothly
- Zoom* and Teams*

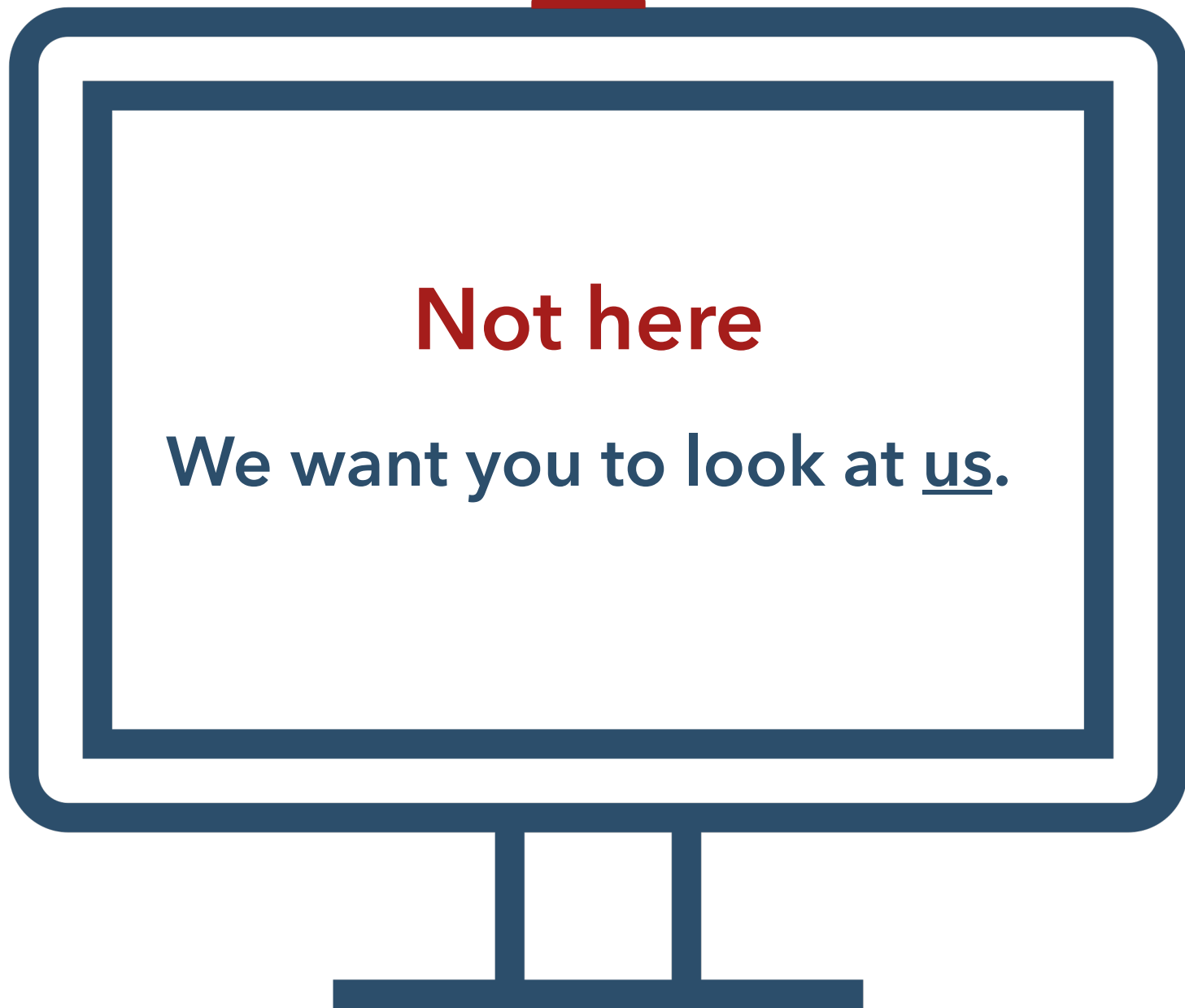
PLATFORM



*Equipment and software that I was using at the start of 2024.



Look here → 





For **hybrid presentations**, don't forget the people online!

Know the tech (video, sound, software)



Coordinate with the tech person (if any)



Mark the stage so you're always on screen



Treat the camera like a person in the room



Repeat room comments for those online

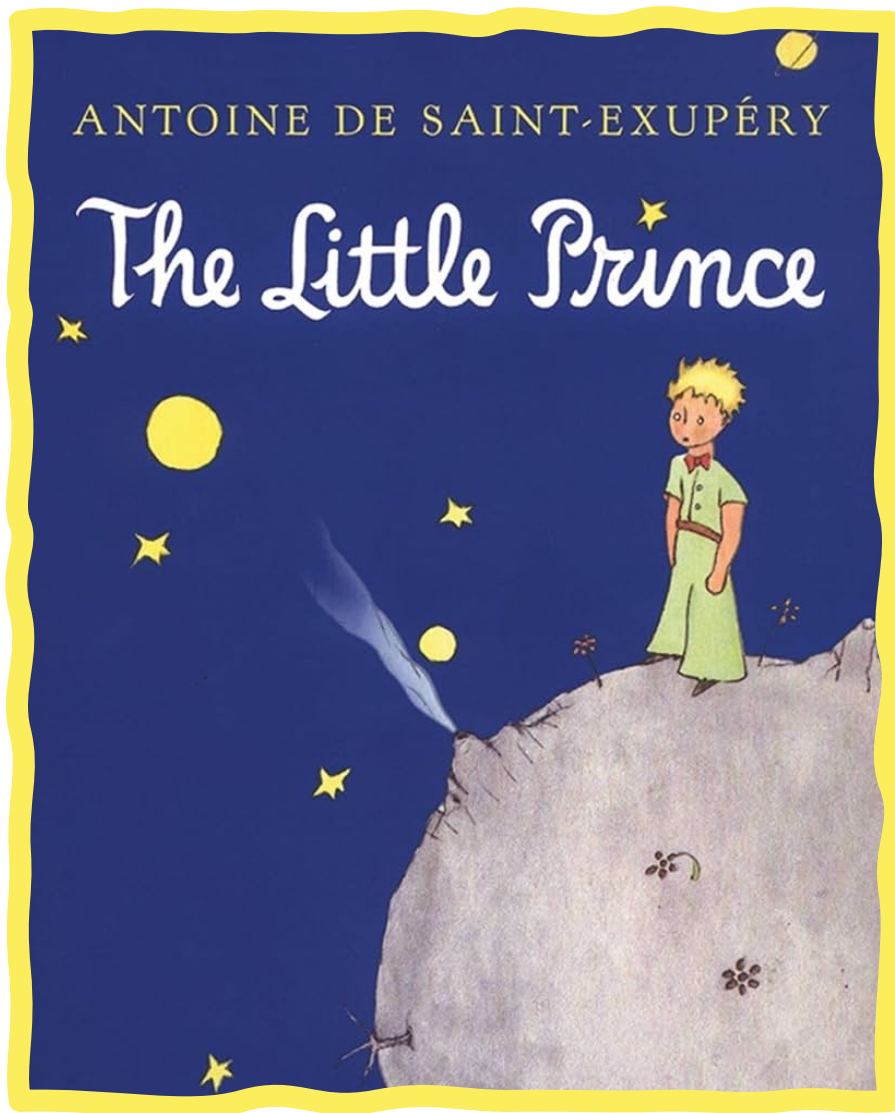


Involve those online in the Q&A





Little Prince, **BIG** idea



"Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

*Author of *The Little Prince**

If you can remove anything from your presentation – facts, data, anecdotes, slides, etc. – and it does not negatively impact your presentation ... **do it!**



Reserve easily accessible seats at the front of the room



Leave space for those using wheelchairs or other mobility devices



Avoid reds and greens on the same slide for those with colour blindness



Ensure visual aids are clear and easy to read (high contrast, large font, well lit)



Use a microphone and speak clearly for the deaf and hard of hearing



Be mindful of lighting (levels and flashing) for those with photosensitivity / migraines





After the talk, where is your **attention**?

How nervous I felt

The one question that I
couldn't answer

The two people who
were bored

Technical glitches

Comparisons with other
speakers

Minor mistakes

Uncontrollable factors

I spoke even though I
was nervous

The four questions that
I answered

The 23 people who
were engaged

How I can avoid those
glitches next time

How I improved over
my previous talk

How I recovered from
those mistakes

Accepting that I can't
control everything

"What you pay attention to expands."

- Brandon Stanton



Prepare
thoroughly

Be authentic

Be vulnerable

Interact with the
audience

Tell more stories

Become
comfortable
with pauses

Put less
information on
slides

Give a
presentation
without slides

Give a
presentation
without notes

Get comfortable
with online
presentations

Seek out
opportunities to
speak

Ask for feedback



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— SPEAKING —

If you would like more tips and insights on public speaking and presentation skills, please visit my website.

If have a specific question or would like to get in touch, I'd love to hear from you.

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