

Q&A

CORPORATE COACH ACADEMY

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TELLING STORIES IN PRESENTATIONS

Q I heard a lot about storytelling as a powerful technique to capture the audience's attention. This is new to me and I want to try it. What do I need to do to be good at it?

A Yes, storytelling can increase the "flavour" of your presentation simply because people love stories. Ask yourself how you will respond when someone starts a speech with "I'd like to tell you a story." Now, compare that with this opening line: "The purpose of my speech is to share with you the advantages of..." Which one arouses your interest and curiosity more? People tend to gravitate towards storytellers because stories have a way of connecting with people for intimacy; they are sharing and not selling something. This makes people feel relaxed and comfortable because they usually can connect to some parts of the story itself. Indeed, storytelling is powerful and can be used for many other situations, such as acknowledging someone publicly, delivering training sessions, speaking at conferences, and so on.

When you are using stories, bear the following in mind. Firstly, decide on the theme and the storyline appropriate to the objective of your presentation. Secondly, use a "dialogue" way to act out the different characters in the conversation. Thirdly, pace the story well in terms of volume and the rate you are telling it. Fourthly, spice it up with some drama and lots of expressions and involve the audience in some way whenever you can.

Finally, relax and just be yourself with a storytelling style you are most comfortable with.

CONNECTING DEEPER WITH PEOPLE

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

- What is a story that can you build into your presentation?
- What characters do you want in your story?
- How can you tell it in a way that will get the audience's attention?
- What flavours do you want to add to your story?

LISTENING WITH COMPASSION

Q Being a God-fearing person, I always try to be compassionate to the people who come into my life. I always thought I was doing well in this until my boss shocked me one day by telling me I lacked compassion during my recent performance appraisal dialogue. He went on to say I am opinionated, rigid in my ways, and too stubborn to accept ideas from others. To him, this is the cause of

misunderstandings and ill feelings among my people. I am still trying to come to terms with what he said. Where could I have gone wrong?

A Something tells me the key issue could lie in your lack of attentiveness when people are talking with you. Many people often think they are listening but, in most cases, they are only hearing, or listening selectively. There is an enormous difference, for instance, between understanding a concept well and feeling what it is. When you "feel" it, somehow it works deep inside you and intuitively makes you do what is necessary. Simply knowing something does not move anyone because you have your own fixed view of what people are telling you. So this could be what your boss was trying to tell you.

The key to compassion is to listen deeply to your people at the "heart" level. When you listen this way,

it really means you are prepared to swallow your pride and suspend judgment to get to the truth of the matter. You will also appreciate their views and opinions in the purest sense. When you do this, it shows you have the greatest respect for what they think and say. For instance, you disagree with a staff who wants to do a piece of work his way but yet you allow him to; this gesture itself shows your empathy and compassion for him. Compassion is indeed a big virtue to have as it requires sincerity, authenticity, and effort to really live it out. It is more than feeling sorry for someone as it is only sympathy that usually calls for some sort of charity for the person.

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

- What are the values that guide your life?
- How are you living them out?
- How compassionate are you with people who disagree with you?
- How can you use it more for better results?

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