

Jared Hansen

COMM 1020

Public Speaking Self-Analysis

Since the earliest forms of communication, the idea of public speaking have been extremely prevalent. Whether the communication was vocal, visual, or written does not really matter, public speaking is the idea of spreading a message to an audience. Since the creation of it, which no one can really claim being the inventor, public speaking has become a very important part of our society and is practically necessary in order to progress continually in life.

As people often say, "I hate public speaking," I feel the same way. It is not something that people are normally excited about nor looking forward too. While I do dislike it, I also enjoy it very much, it is almost like a love-hate relationship. I enjoy it because it can be extremely fun, as long as it is something I like to talk about and I maintain a good attitude, as well as exciting! For me, public speaking is more than just a class required in order to get my Associates degree. It is a skill that I plan to take and better as I use it throughout my life. For one, communication is important in nearly all aspects of life, the use of it makes life easier. I can use public speaking as a way to connect with people. Instead of standing on a stage for a half hour receiving awkward stares and accomplishing nothing, I can talk about common interest and receive an applause instead. It will also be an important skill for me to have for any job that I may have in the future. I would like to always be prepared to do what needs to be done, and I never know when I might have to present my findings, ideas, or even represent the company. Leadership is another key thing directly related to public speaking. I am a leader and if I want to actually be able to lead, I will have to have the skill, confidence, and knowledge

required to do just that. No one wants to follow a leader who stands before them stuttering while searching for the words or ideas, looking like an amateur. The ability to speak is equally important as the ability to lead and I would like to be profound in each. Finally, I can use public speaking to spread ideas. Everyone thinks, and everyone has ideas, but unless the individual chooses to speak up and spread them they end up getting stolen or forgotten. It is not fair to allow that to happen when the idea has the opportunity to change the world, in any way. It all starts with something as simple as taking a public speaking class and eventually we can be standing up in front of the cameras, broadcasting an idea that is new, exciting, and so well presented that it literally makes the world a different place. We say we hate it, but it is something that is necessary for us to love as well.

We are all natural born speakers, it just so happens that some need to work on certain aspects more than others, but we all have the gift. One thing that I have found myself extremely natural at is the analyzing the audience process. Since I was young I have done very well with placing myself in the positions of others and being able to understand them almost as if I were them. As a speaker, it is important to know who your audience is and adapt to meet them, not the other way around. No matter what we are speaking about, if we are not appealing then it is all for nothing. This does not mean that we have to talk about something the entire audience will agree with, but rather, we need to talk in a way that pleases the audience and can keep interest (36-39). It is important to keep in mind the audience's age, cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, political affiliation, and gender to ensure the respect of the audience and to avoid offending (40). This is helping me to be a better speaker because the audience is more engaged and interested in the topic I wish to discuss. It would be a waste of my time and theirs if I talk about something that they do not care to hear or fail to adapt in an appropriate way. Another thing that I have impressed myself with is the ability to select a topic and a purpose for

that topic. The topic of a speech can be extremely important on the success of it. In all honesty, any topic can be chosen to talk about but if there is no purpose in the speech, there is also no point of doing the speech. If the purpose does not relate to the audience, neither does the topic. Another thing to always keep in mind is to avoid topics that are constantly being talked about, it provides the audience with nothing more than a good reason to sleep during the presentation (48). Be spontaneous, new, exciting, and out there; to do this, it is a great idea to begin with a brainstorm session, often the idea comes to you (48). Identify and narrow the topic down, if the speaker can not do this, neither can their audience. This is key for the audience to actually have something to learn (49-51). This has helped me to truly gain the attention of the audience; although my topics have not been something everyone is interested in, a good purpose allows them to relate and actually learn something from the speech. Something to go right along with the two previous concepts is the delivery method of the speech. The way that we deliver the speech defines us as a speaker and represents the topic that we are sharing. Different delivery methods attract the audience members in different ways whether it be from manuscript, memory, an impromptu, or extemporaneously (142-144). We do not want to deliver a message in a fashion which makes us look weak, foolish, or unqualified. To avoid this we have to show confidence, naturalness, enthusiasm, and most importantly we need to engage the audience (142). We may not have all of those things, but we can still show them in order to gain the favor of the audience. Make it fun or interesting in the least. We can engage the audience either physically, mentally, or by simply connecting to them, but if we act as if we are talking to a lifeless object then that is what they might be by the end. This has helped me out extremely when it comes to keeping the attention of the audience. Through the delivery, even a boring topic can be made interesting, fun, or important to the audience. A good speaker can deliver their speech in a better way than just delivering it.

The single, most important concept of public speaking is one that is not listed in the book, at least on the table of contents. It is to become one with the audience before, during, and after the speech or occasion has occurred. By doing this, it allows everything else that is necessary to become a great public speaker to fall in place. I would like to call it the foundation of public speaking. By becoming one, the anxiety goes away, people listen, the audience is understood, it is easy to relate to them, the delivery is an ease, and all will go smoothly. I will continue to develop this after the course because it is not something that can be mastered. There is always a new audience and another opportunity to “become one.” Improvement is always possible and that is exactly what I plan to do, maybe I can change the world.

Works Cited

O'Hair, Dan, Hannah Rubenstein, and Robert A. Stewart. *A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking*. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013. Print.