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1.2021

Today's Style of Public Speaking

Have you streamed a presentation or conference recently? Or perhaps

watched a TED (technology, entertainment and design) talk? You may have noticed that public speaking has changed in recent years. Gone are the days of formally delivering a perfectly practiced speech from notecards to a passive audience. Instead, public speakers are expected to embrace a style that is personal, dynamic, conversational and engaging.

This approach doesn't have to be intimidating; just keep these strategies in mind:

Simplify. Today's successful presentations don't rely on complicated videos, analogies or lengthy handouts to make a point. Let your message be the star of the show. If your presentation includes text, keep sentences short and in 30-point size.

Focus on the big picture. Don't get hung up on every line and word you will say. Instead, step back to work on bigger issues, such as your energy level, pacing, gestures and personal stories. With this style of public speaking, delivery matters as much as the content.

Practice with a group or on video. Rather than going over notecards or practicing in the mirror, rehearse in front of a small audience or videotape yourself so you can watch and modify your presentation. The key is to anticipate how the talk may be received.



Know your subject matter. The more you know, the more confident and comfortable you will be sharing your knowledge.



5 Ways to De-Stress Now

Use these techniques to find a small oasis of calm amid the chaos, and recharge your mind and spirit in just five minutes.

1 Be thankful. Maintaining a sense of gratitude promotes optimism and resistance to stress. Take five minutes to write down three things you're thankful for, no matter how small or how simple.



2 Breathe deep. Take a moment to close your eyes, sit up straight, and place one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Breathe in slowly, and feel your chest expand under your hand. Then, send the breath deeper into your belly. Exhale slowly.

3 Tune in to your senses. Stress comes from within. Shut it down by focusing on sensations and your environment. Listen to music or view favorite pictures (vacation, scenery, etc.) to ease tension and distract your mind from stress.

4 Avoid slumping. Keep your head up and shoulders back. Correct posture lessens the muscle tension from stress.



5 Drink water and have a light snack. Hunger and dehydration can aggravate stress.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF — YOU FIGHT STRESS BETTER WHEN YOU PRACTICE HEALTHY HABITS.

➔ Secondhand Stress

People get stressed out by someone, who is angry, anxious or panicked and in their visual field, even if they are separated by a window, according to University of California, Riverside researchers. This **secondhand stress** can damage health and productivity in the same ways as the stress you experience. Find ways to tune out the negativity around you. Create a positive mindset, do stress-relieving activities and exercises, and express gratitude and happiness toward yourself and others. The best results come when you find ways to accept adversity and make peace with your environment and within yourself.



The Right Time for Coffee?

If you have a morning cup of coffee, research suggests you may get more out of the caffeine boost if you wait. Levels of the hormone **cortisol**, which makes you feel alert, are at their highest levels around 8 or 9 a.m., so the extra caffeine lift isn't as effective. Later, between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., cortisol tapers off, so that may be the best time to enjoy your coffee.



Watch Your Tone

You've heard it before: What you say doesn't matter as much as how you say it. But, what does that mean for workplace communication? Tune up your tone at work with these reminders:



Calm down. If you are upset, angry or stressed, your message will likely come across as inflammatory and negative. Calm down first, and deliver your words when you are in a better frame of mind.

Use positive language. Accusatory words, such as "You messed up," "What were you thinking?" and "You are taking too long with this" put people on the defensive. Make the tone more positive and use "I" statements instead, such as "I'd like to work on a solution with you," "I'm sure we can work this out," or "When can I expect to see your report?"

Keep emotions in check. A request, instructions or an important message can get lost if it's delivered with sarcasm, you sound like you are angry or impatient, or you talk down to people. Strive for an even, inclusive, positive tone that ensures you are understood and will not offend.

Videoconferencing Tips

Team members and colleagues today collaborate from all corners of the globe, increasing the need for remote meetings. Videoconferencing makes long-distance communication across continents more effective and personal.

Get the most from your next videoconference this way:

- **Be on time.** Allow time to log in to the conferencing software, so that you are present in the meeting at its scheduled start time.
- **Speak in a normal tone of voice.** Whether you are speaking over your phone or using a microphone connected to your computer, the device will pick up your voice, and people can adjust their own volumes on their devices or computers. Don't shout, and speak clearly.
- **Avoid big gestures or fidgeting.** Too much motion can be distracting and detract from your message.
- **Use your mute button.** Mute your microphone when you are not speaking to cut down on background noise — just remember to turn it back on when it's your turn to talk.
- **Look at the camera.** This allows you to maintain eye contact.
- **Stay focused.** Avoid doing other work, having side conversations, or leaving your space during a videoconference.
- **Follow regular meeting etiquette.** Give speakers your full attention, don't interrupt, keep remarks brief and respect the agenda and time limit. A videoconference might be virtual, but it has the same goals as any other professional group conversation.



Put Feedback to Work

Receiving feedback can feel uncomfortable, but if you adopt the attitude that feedback is useful, you can transform the experience into a wonderful way to boost your productivity and performance. Here's how:

Listen carefully. Hear what the person offering feedback has to say without interrupting, defending yourself or forming a response.

Be receptive and respectful. As you listen to feedback, keep your body relaxed and open. Avoid crossing your legs, making a fist, fidgeting or crossing your arms over your body. This will help the speaker be more honest, and it will help you absorb what's said.

Question. Make sure you understand the feedback, and ask for clarification if you don't.

Assess and follow up. Think over the feedback, and consider how you might use the suggestions you were given to improve your performance.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **5 Ways to De-Stress Now**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V1tools.



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