Look Before You Speak

In a previous lesson, you heard the idea of being a reporter versus putting your audience into the scenes in your story. The problem with this is that you’re simply retelling the event rather letting the audience relive the experience.

One way to relive the experience is to show the facial expressions of your characters before you deliver lines of dialogue. These expressions convey the emotions of people involved in the scene.

Very few presenters do this, though. Most tell their stories in the following manner:

“When I told my son Jason he would be going on the trip to Florida because of his straight A’s, his face lit up. He got a huge grin. He was so thankful.”

Or, “Jenny was so mad. You could see it on her face. After a few seconds, she yelled at Jim and asked how he could spend so much on a motorcycle”

Is there anything wrong with this? No, but there are better ways to present these events so that the audience feels as if they’re reliving the scene. How?

First, set up the scene. Describe the circumstances that lead into the dialogue.

Second, instead of describing how a character feels, demonstrate the emotion. This is the concept called ‘Look Before You Speak.’ This physical reaction sets up the line of dialogue that follows.

Third, give the line of dialogue.

Then, make sure you pause for reflection.
In one of the examples above, you could present the scene like this:

My son Jason had been asking to go to Florida for months. After I reviewed his third quarter grades on line, I called him into the living room.

“What’s up, Dad?”

“I need to talk to you about your grades.”

“Is there something wrong?”

Notice the pause between the lines. This conveys Jason’s concern. What you can’t see is that I also have a worried look on my face and I’m slightly leaning backwards. This is a look and a body stance someone who is worried might give.

“Oh, absolutely...not! You got straight A’s kiddo. You know what that means?”

“We’re...going...to Florida?”

As I say this, my eyes are wide open and I have a hopeful look on my face. Again, notice the pause between lines. This allows me to show Jason’s expression.

“You bet, son! You lived up to your end of the deal; now we’re going to live up to ours. We’re going next week”.

“Oh, wow! Thanks Dad! This is great! I can’t wait to tell Ricky....”

As I say those lines, what type of expression do you think is on my face? A huge grin, my eyes are wide open and I look happy, just like any kid would who’d just been told he’s just gotten his wish, and he’s going to Florida on vacation.
Is the look before you speak really that important? You bet. When you can convey the emotions of your characters, rather than describe them, you make a deeper connection with the audience. That’s because they feel like they’re witnessing the scene live. This helps them feel the emotion of the moment, and they care more about the people involved. That is the power of the Look Before You Speak.

**ACTION STEP:** Review the dialogue in your speech. Look for those lines where emotion is conveyed, and where you are describing the feelings rather than showing them. Practice using facial expressions to convey the emotions rather than words.

Your recommended resource this week is to re-watch a video you’ve previously seen in this program. It’s the [World Championship speech](#) of Darren LaCroix. Darren masterfully exhibits the concepts presented this week. For instance, watch the look on his face after he tells his parents he wants to be a comedian. Notice how the change of expression conveys a major shift in his emotion. He doesn’t need to say a word.

**Until next week, always remember, you have a story that someone needs to hear.**
Recommended Resources

1) 3D Storytelling Workshop  Click on this link: 3D Storytelling Workshop

2) Inject More Humor into Your Presentations  Click on this link: Inject More Humor into Your Presentations

3) Go Ahead and Laugh!  Click on this link: Go Ahead and Laugh

4) Stand Up, Stand OUT!  Click on this link: Stand Up, Stand OUT!

5) EDGE of Their Seats Storytelling  Click on this link: Edge of Their Seats Storytelling

6) Hollywood Presentation Skills  Click on this link: Hollywood Presentation Skills

Michael’s Background

For many years, Michael Davis gave presentations and speeches that were, in a word, ineffective. Mistakes, confusing messages and failed attempts to capture the interest and attention of audiences created tremendous frustration.

Then a chance meeting with World Champion speaker David Brooks opened the door to meeting many other World Champion and Hall of Fame speakers. Investment of time, energy and thousands of dollars in training and coaching helped him develop the skills to become a speaker and leader who influences, impacts, and inspires others.

In 2011, he earned the certification of World Class Speech Coach. He also studies the art of comedy and movie making to learn new skills that can take speech creation and delivery to new levels.
“Mike Davis is an engaging, inspiring speaker. I believe, however, that his greatest talent is his ability to draw the best out of those lucky enough to have him as a coach. I had this privilege for a period of four months. During this time, he constantly challenged me to improve both the content of my speeches and my delivery. I would not have made the finals in Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking competition without the help of Mike Davis. I don’t know of a better Public Speaking teacher in Cincinnati.”

Chris Nachtrab
Vice President & Partner
The Everest Group

“Last summer, when I spoke and promoted to subscribe to [my email newsletter] Hot Marketing Tips, I got a big fat zero sign ups.

At your wise suggestion, I passed the signup clipboard around the room this time. When you first mentioned it, it felt very old-fashion and not trendy or technology driven. I set a goal for 50 new sign ups. Probably 2 times more than I have ever had sign up at one time.

When I tallied the new subscribers after the lunch yesterday, we hit a total of 72! I think that is about 46% of the room. THANKS!”

Drew Dinkelacker
President, The Marketing Accelerator

“Evaluate to Elevate is a powerful program. Every speaker should hear it... twice!”

Darren LaCroix
2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

“Mike helped me fine tune a 10-minute presentation from “too much information” into a clear, to-the-point focus that has not only given me more confidence, but generating more positive feedback from the audience NOW than I did before meeting with Mike.

Mike has a unique ability to help you focus on the main point(s) of your presentation and then how to present them in a way that is easy for those in the audience to understand.”

Doug Smith
Sr. Account Executive
Hubbard Interactive
“The success I enjoyed in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking is the result of coaching I received from Mike Davis. He helped me refine and deliver a speech that carried me all the way to the finals. His tireless dedication is outstanding! Mike Davis will help you communicate better and be more successful.”

Phil Barth
Portfolio Manager
International Paper

“Mike has an easy way of working with you that isn’t intimidating… Amazing, insightful feedback… My presentations are now far more interesting and result in additional sales of my services. No matter what the level of speaking at which you may be performing, you’re sure to improve with Mike Davis.”

Joann Westwood
Westwood Virtual Associates, LLC

“Mike Davis breathed life into a topic that many of our group of trial lawyers take for granted, that public speaking is both an art and a science. It is clear that Mike is himself passionate about this topic and his insights are invaluable for those facing the daunting task of public speaking for the first time and for those seasoned veterans behind the podium”.

David Williamson
Attorney

“Michael has completely opened my eyes! I’m performing at an entire new level. I went into my last event with the utmost confidence thanks to him. He even called me the night before with a few last-minute reminders! If you speak for a living — if your revenue depends on your ability to communicate, you NEED Michael Davis!”

Brennan Scanlon
Co-Executive Director
Business Network International

“I recommend the coaching services of Michael Davis. He helped me to put a new, more meaningful spin on my existing presentations that enabled me to connect with my audience. He provided me with tools and resources that allowed me to gain confidence, decrease my anxiety, and more effectively get my message across. Most importantly, he taught me how to have fun with public speaking!”

Dr. Laura Ward
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital