

# Public Speaking

*Peter Dhu, Public Speaking Dynamics*

## A Current Affair

I was lucky enough to be interviewed and have a story go to air on Channel 9's "A Current Affair" program on the 18 June. The main purpose of the story was to highlight the role that the Speak Easy Association has in helping people who stutter. However the journalists quickly turned their attention to the fact that I was a person who stutters and had a long and difficult history with my

stutter, yet I now undertake public speaking training and I help people to become better communicators and more confident public speakers. My stutter is indeed my unique selling proposition (USP) and I fully understand the fear, difficulties and lack of confidence that people experience when public speaking. A common thread in the feedback that I get from people who

attend my workshops is that I have great credibility in my public speaking training. I have walked the walked. I have moved from zero, to be able to speak effectively and in a relaxed and confident manner, mostly stutter free.

My personal journey gives them strength and a vision that they also can become an effective public speakers. If I can do it, then anyone can.

## Relaxation

Relaxation is one of the keys to overcoming any fear or anxiety based feeling. For me relaxation was the tool that got me realizing that I could control my nerves. I could control my anxiety and the fear diminished as I walked into the room with confidence.

I was taught a series of relaxation techniques by speech pathologists, that when used, enabled me to commence speaking in a state of relative calm

and readiness and gave me a sense of being in control. This was a first for me as a person who stutters – being in control – before speaking.

The relaxation tools that I learnt relate mostly to the head, neck jaw and vocal muscles and are generally used before you are giving a prepared speech or have a few minutes before a meeting. If someone suddenly asked you to speak off-the-cuff, unexpectedly, then you may not have

the time or privacy to do these quick relaxations. So they are good for prepared speaking situations where you know in advance.

I recommend developing relaxation strategies, visualization, quick relaxes, deep breathing exercises that you can silently and secretly use before speaking. It is one of the corner stones for controlling anxiety and fear associated with speaking

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*"The only mistake is the one that you don't learn from".*

*John Powell*

## Successful Impromptu Speaking

The ability to "think and speak" on your feet is a tremendous asset to have in your social, business and everyday life. Speaking off the cuff is a real life skill and one that is used more times than you may think. While being able to give excellent prepared presentations, lectures and keynote presentations is a wonderful skill, many of us fall down when put on the spot. When asked to respond off the cuff or in an impromptu fashion. This can occur in meetings, after presentations, while supervising staff and of course during job interviews. To successfully communicate your ideas in these situations you must be able to organise your thoughts quickly and present them in a clear and logical manner.

There are 7 tools that I use to help me structure a response when asked to speak off the cuff. Each one is applicable at different times and you just need to decide which tool is best suited for the question you have been asked.

1. Describe how the subject affects you personally/what I know about.....
2. Follow the PREP Method:
  - state your **P**oint of view.
  - give **R**eason for point of view.
  - **E**xplain how point of view came about. Give your experience or other real life experience if possible.
  - summarise what you said and repeat **P**oint of view.
3. Follow the PPF (**Past, Present, and Future**) Method:
4. Use the **3 Important Things** Method. Start with "There are 3 important things that come to mind about this subject"
- 5 The **Pros / Cons** Method. Advantages/Disadvantages
- 6 The PCS (**Problem Cause Solution**) Method.
- 7 The **6 Question** Method. Ask yourself:" Who, What, When, Why, Where & How" as you are speaking to jog your memory.

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## Remember the KIS - Keep It Simple rule.

Herbert Simon noted that - "Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention"

Don't overload them with information or fall into the trap of death by PowerPoint.