

SMEADOWS' GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL SPEECH DELIVERY

- **Dress well.** If you look good, you feel good, and our society is pretty shallow – even those of us who don't want to be shallow conform to societal expectations about appearances. If you look like you know what you're doing, that you've taken time to craft an appearance and to really look your best, you're at a huge advantage over anyone who hasn't.
 - Common errors made in appearance:
 - Dangling or distracting jewelry.
 - Hair that falls into or covers your face, including bangs. PIN IT BACK or TIE IT BACK. We want to see your face at all times. We don't want to watch you fight with your hair the whole time as we'll stop listening and will simply watch!
 - Guys, you need to wear a belt.
 - If you wear a tie, it should reach your belt and hang slightly below the top of the belt but not below the bottom.
 - A suit jacket / blazer is best for guys; girls have many more options – just make sure that any skirts at least reach your knees if not lower, and wear hose or tights.
 - Ironing is good. Wrinkles are not. 'Nuff said.
- **Gestures** are to be above the waist and below the head unless you are having a hallelujah moment. Think open hand and from the shoulder. No Frankenstein, penguin, or *danger Will Robinson*. PLAN your gestures and practice them.
- **Walking** is important. If you don't know how to do it for speeches, there are three basic premises to remember.
 - a. When you move, start with the foot that's already on the side of the direction in which you are moving.
 - b. Movement should never be backwards as it breaks the speaker's bond with the audience. Move forward or in a sideways gait; a good way to keep moving forward but not run out of room is to make many of your movements diagonal. If you are moving sideways, be sure to turn your torso and head so that you are still talking to the audience, not the wall in front of you.
 - c. Be sure to keep talking while you walk. You look a lot like Forrest Gump if you don't.
- **EYE CONTACT IS THE GOLDEN TICKET.**

Successful use of eye contact shows that you are prepared, engages your audience, and is the best way I know to win a round. Successful eye contact means SUSTAINED EYE CONTACT: talking to a specific audience member for a few sentences (a thought), then moving on to another one somewhere else in the room. Don't have a stare-down with anyone, but do engage a particular person, then another particular person. Use the whole room, but don't scan the room as you speak (makes you look uncertain and a bit shifty). Never talk to walls, ceilings, or floors; they've heard it all and give lousy nonverbal feedback.

EYE CONTACT INFO WITH VISUAL AIDS:

When using visual aids of any kind (including Power Point slides), be familiar enough with them that you can simply indicate where they are as you continue talking to the audience while they are in view of the audience. AT NO POINT should you talk to your visual aids; it's creepy. Additionally, you should be aware that there is a special circle of Hell reserved for speakers who read Power Point slides word-for-word to audiences. It indicates that you think the audience can't read, that you're not prepared enough to speak on a topic from notes, and that you didn't read this sheet. Power Point slides should be NOTES presented in an interesting way, not the lecture itself.

ONE MORE NOTE:

And if your print or font is not large enough for a middle-aged teacher to see from the back row of class, it's a problem. Ditto for facial expressions and gestures. Remember that audience is always your focus, even the teacher or judge. And often especially the teacher or judge. And keep in mind volume and speed as well.