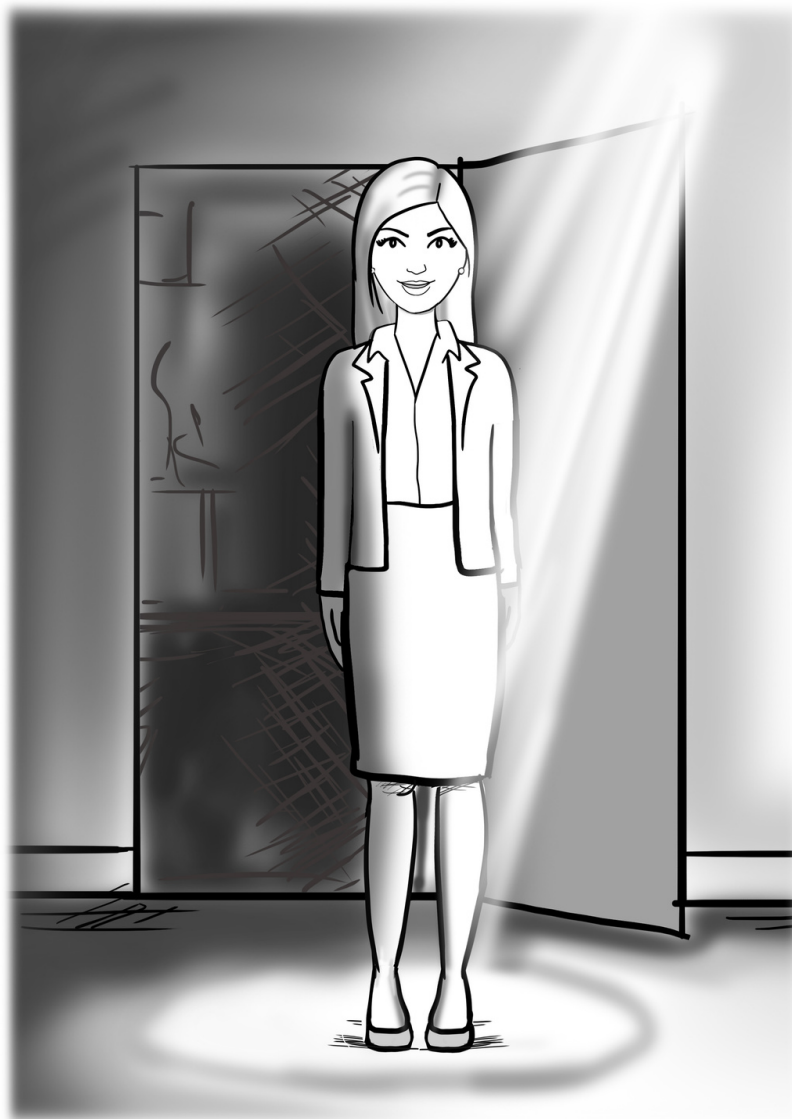


21 TIPS TO BETTER PRESENTATIONS



by

Sally Hindmarch

Thank you ...

for downloading this 21 tips to better presentations. I'm looking forward to helping you to build your impact & influence by improving your presentation technique and approach.

Whether you are presenting to one or one thousand there are moments when you don't feel as confident as you would like to and there are tiny changes that you can make that will make a difference.

Having spent the last two decades working with clients who don't enjoy presenting I have picked 21 tips that they have told me make the most difference.

It's not a definitive list but each one can make a difference and if you take all 21 on board you will, without doubt, be delivering better presentations.

To help you put these tips into action, join my free 5 day [communication challenge](#).

In my book [Step Out From The Shadows](#) I share ways to improve your communication in other business situations, for example getting your point across effectively in a meeting or having a difficult conversation with a member of staff.

I work with clients in a number of ways and would be delighted to chat with you if you have a specific challenge. Do [give me a call](#) if you would like to see if my approach is right for you.

Thank you again for downloading these tips and I look forward to speaking to you soon.

Best wishes

Sally



Tip 1: Breathe.

When you're tense or doing something hard and concentrating, it's easy to forget to breathe. Not breathing well will mean you're not speaking well.

It's key to understand how to breathe properly and the importance of using your lungs as fully as possible. Put your hand onto your tummy just above your belly button and breathe. You should feel your hand moving up and out as you fill your lungs and move down and in as you breathe out.

Take a moment before your presentation to tune into your breathing; breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth a few times before you start speaking.

Tip 2: Prepare.

Nearly 30 years ago my husband's best man tried to speak without preparation and he still has nightmares about it! If you don't want to end up like him then don't try to wing it.

Others may tell you that they do; they are probably liars and definitely not as good as they could be.

If you have a great presentation that you are going to deliver often, then each time you deliver it, you can prepare less than before ... but there will always be a need for some preparation.

Tip 3: Have a point.

Know why you are standing up and talking.

It sounds so obvious but we often sit through presentations that go on for an hour or more and when the speaker sits down, we've no idea what they want us to do and what the point of the presentation was.

Do you want to educate? Motivate? Berate? Do you want your audience to take action, buy from you or be inspired and sign up to something? If you know why you are speaking, it makes it much easier to prepare and to ask the audience to take action.

Tip 4: Know who you want your audience to be.

You can't please everyone.

Who are you speaking to? Who do you want what you are saying, to resonate with? By deciding who your ideal audience member is going to be and preparing the presentation specifically for them, you'll find the preparation much easier and your presentation more effective.

Tip 5: Bring your own essentials.

If you are presenting in the room prepare a bag or pocket in your briefcase of essentials.

For me it contains a bottle of water, memory stick containing the presentation, a printed version, wireless presentation "clicker", deodorant and a piece of fruit or nuts ... there is nothing more off putting than a growling stomach!

Work out what will throw your presentation if something isn't there or doesn't work and make sure you have spares or an alternative.

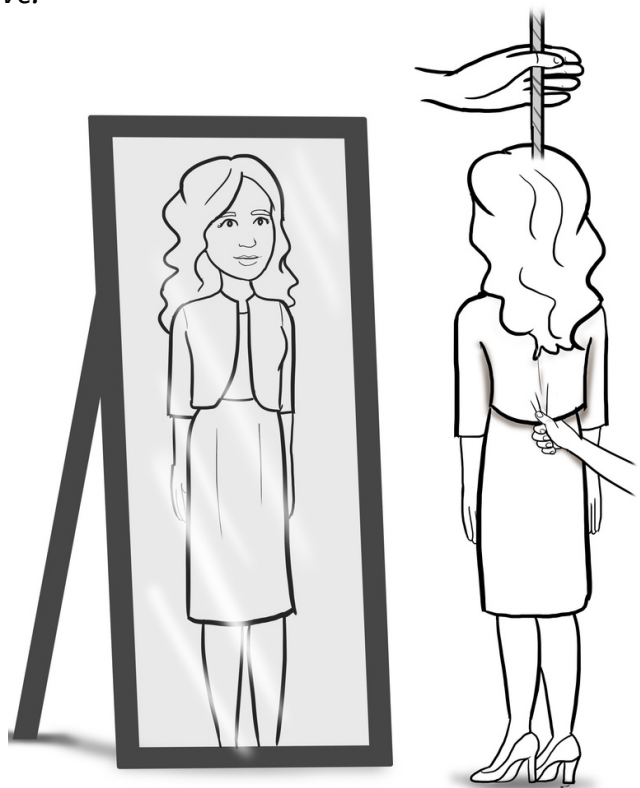
Tip 6 Stand well.

If you stand straight, you look more capable! It's that simple.

We make snap decisions about others based on the way that they stand, and that means other people are making that decision about you!

Pull your shoulders back a little, look ahead (but don't lift your chin high) and stand tall.

If you have something to say, you need to look as though others should listen.



Tip 7: Look them in the eye.

When presenting, whether 1-1 or to a large group, eye contact is essential. If your audience can't see your eyes they won't hear you, so make sure you look at all of the room. Be careful to include those on the edges to your left and right.

And as tempting as it is, don't bear down on the one person nodding in agreement. You'll lose the rest of the audience and will terrify the person nodding!

Tip 8: Smile.

When you're nervous the muscles in your face and around your mouth tense and it's harder to smile.

Smiling will warm the audience to you but only if it's a real smile. (A fake smile looks as close to a snarling animal as you can get!)

Think of someone or something that makes you happy as you stand to speak and you'll loosen those facial muscles, warm the audience to you and your presentation will be the better for it.

Tip 9: Keep hydrated.

Keep hydrated. Drink lots of water (sips not gulps) and always bring your own small bottle of water in case there isn't any provided.

Avoid milky drinks beforehand as this will make your mouth "claggy". A mint or fruit tea is preferable if you want a hot drink.

Tip 10: Warm up your voice.

Warm up your voice before you start talking.

If you were going out for a run you would warm up your muscles, wouldn't you? Well, your throat, tongue and mouth are all muscles. If you don't warm up you may well harm them and find you lose your voice more often. If all you do is say some tongue twister to get everything moving that would be a start!

Tip 11: Avoid comfort food.

Carbs at lunch will make you and your audience sleepy! Avoid them if you can.

Fish & Chips on a wet Wednesday may seem like a good idea but it is really hard to show your passion if you're fighting off the urge to doze!

Tip 12: Use PowerPoint sparingly.

Power Point slides add context, variety and impact to your presentation but not if you just read the bullet points on your slides to your audience.

If you are in the room use "Ctrl B" or "Ctrl W" to blank out your screen while you draw the attention back to you.

Tip 13: Create slides, handouts AND notes.



Slides, handouts and notes are three different things.

Your slides are the icing on the cake of your presentation – not essential for you to be able to deliver your message but a great addition for your audience.

Work on the assumption that the electricity may go off just before your presentation ... you need to be able to carry on regardless.

Your handouts should contain any detail you want to refer to (references/ diagrams etc), an overview of the content of your presentation, your details and a call to action if appropriate.

Your notes are to help you to remember the key topics or points that you want to cover, so you don't need bullet points to read from on the slides!

Tip 14: Create vocal variety.

When you're feeling nervous your face and mouth muscles tense and this can mean that your voice becomes monotone, which in turn makes for a dull presentation! You may not notice as the speaker, but a speech on one note (whatever the note) isn't interesting to listen to.

Make the effort to build variety in your speech. Speed up. Slow down. Pause. And try to change your pitch on purpose occasionally. Your audience will be much more engaged, and you'll get your message across more effectively.

Tip 15: Use affirmations.

Internal chatter can be negative and that affects your view of yourself and your skills.

Affirmations can stop the effect of such negativity. At its simplest, it's a positive statement such as "I am a good presenter" or "I'm a great communicator" and if you say it often enough you'll find your negative chatter starts to diminish.

Whatever you do, make sure it is positive, in the present and believable so that the chatter in your head doesn't disagree.

If you find your internal chatter adding something like, "Oh no you're not!" to the end, then tone it down to something it can't argue with so "I am a good presenter" becomes "I am an improving presenter".

Tip 16: Handle your mistakes with confidence.

We all make them! And truth be told the audience won't be fazed by your mistake but by the way you handle it.

Become flustered and start allowing it to affect your performance and they will assume this is a reflection of your wider skills.

If only you know you've made a mistake, then suck it up, smile and carry on. If the audience knows (for example you've fallen over) then suck it up, apologise for the interruption, smile and carry on! The audience will admire you all the more for it.

Tip 17: Remember you're not the centre of their world.

If you notice someone in the audience checking their watch or closing their eyes, is your first thought... "Oh no! I'm boring them!"?

STOP! Look at the others in the audience and if they all look interested then it's not you. You aren't the centre of everyone else's world.

It could just be those fish and chips for lunch. The person with the watch ... maybe their mother or partner is having an operation right now. The one dozing in the corner? Maybe they have an ill child who has kept them up all night.

Learn to assume that it's them not you until proven otherwise.

Tip 18: Show your passion, enthusiasm, interest.

If you don't care and can't muster up the enthusiasm to come across as interested then it doesn't really matter about the last 17 tips!

Whatever the point of your presentation; be it to sell, motivate or deliver bad news you need to care. You need to look as though you want to talk to your audience or they won't want to listen to you.

Passion is a much-overused word but you must have it. If you can't get enthused by your topic then think about something that matters to you. Use the passion you have for that to change the way you look and how you speak throughout your presentation.



You have to work a little harder at showing your enthusiasm on screen. Your energy levels need to be higher than they might normally be.

Think of an energy level scale of 1 – 10; where 1 is lying in your bed lazily thinking about getting up and 10 is dancing as though no one is watching. If you want to be seen as about a 6 by your audience then aim to present at about an 8 to camera.

Tip 19: Control your fiddles and fidgets

You CAN control what the audience perceives to be true. You may be rubbing your arm because it's bruised but it will look as though you feel unsure and need comfort. If you are constantly playing with your hair your audience will assume you are nervous.

Fiddles and fidgets quickly become habits and you may not notice them, so ask a good friend or colleague if you have any and to point them out when they can. Like any habit, once you become aware it's happening you can work at stopping yourself.

Tip 20: Don't be frightened to use your hands

Back in the 80's a lot of presentation trainers told us not to use our hands when presenting as it was distracting. That's true if it's a fiddle or fidget but not when your gestures match what you're saying. When your body language, voice and words are congruent, you have more authority and come across as more authentic.

One thing to remember when on camera though, if you gesticulate a lot check that your hands don't keep popping up from below the frame. If they do you'll look as though your hands have a life of their own and your gestures will look strange. If you like to or need to use your hands, then make sure that the camera is set up to allow you to speak naturally.

Tip 21: Think about your what your audience will see

Make sure there isn't a window behind you as you'll appear as a silhouette and your audience won't see your face. True in the room or on camera; but on camera also make sure that there is a light in front of you so you don't look as though you're in a cave.

Check what's behind you. If you're on camera take a snap shot from the camera position of where you will be and double check that there is nothing in the eye line of the camera that you don't want to be there (household mess, company papers, open doors that other's might walk past in various states of dress, etc, etc).

Double check if you're in the same room as your audience too. It's easy for them to be distracted by what's going on behind you or ponder what it is that looks as though it's sticking out of your head.

About Sally ...

With a degree in Psychology & Drama and a Diploma in Management, Sally has spent much of her career in sales and client service roles. She has witnessed first-hand how poor communication can make or break a deal, a relationship or a business. Clients buy from who they like best, staff work late because of who asks them and colleagues work better with some individuals than others.



Since 2000, Sally has run Partners With You Ltd, a company that uses techniques from the world of theatre and the skills of professional actors to help people in business communicate more effectively and confidently; typically working on areas such as presentation, storytelling, team building, leadership, sales and customer service.

Sally is a certified PRISM Brain Mapping practitioner and Language & Behaviour Profile practitioner which she also uses to help clients understand their communication preferences and how to adapt them to get better outcomes.

A contributor to Steve Bridger's book Transform Your Communication Skills, Sally writes a monthly column for The Watford Observer and other Newsquest papers. She is the author of Step Out from the Shadows; How to be seen and heard at work.

"Sally is excellent at quickly spotting areas for improvement that make a big difference. She is calm, capable and very knowledgeable with lots of vital tricks to share."

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When not working you are likely to find her puppy sitting for her two grand-dogs. She is at her happiest surrounded by family and friends with a glass of white wine in her hand.

To find out how you can work with Sally to improve your communication skills visit her website stepoutfromtheshadows.co.uk. Click here to [buy her book direct](#) or [via audible](#) and if you want to speak to her about a specific communication concern then email her at sally@stepoutfromtheshadows.co.uk or [book a call](#) with her now.

"Sally has helped me with insights, tools and techniques to help me improve and clarify my communication ... She has an unusual combination of being very supportive, whilst also challenging you to be the best you can be."

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