

Creating Your Speaker Persona: A Little Larger than Life

Master your instrument:

You communicate your presence with your voice, face, and body.

Animate your voice

- Practice good pacing and good emphasis—shape what you are saying with your voice.
- Listeners are used to professional speakers and you will sound under-skilled if you use a typically flat manner of speech. Your pacing and emphasis should sound a little exaggerated to you to sound about right to us.

Engage with your face

- Bring your face into play to connect with your audience and help your voice shape and emphasize what you say. Listeners generally find it easier to engage with an expressive speaker than with a low-key speaker. Watch your video to gauge your expressiveness.
- If eye contact makes you nervous, begin by looking right over the shoulder of someone in the room. You give the sense of being engaged instead of the sense of being disengaged. If you are very nervous, bring someone with you to look at.

Coordinate your upper body with your face and voice

- Practice using large, open gestures to shape your phrasing and content.
- Don't lock your elbows and make small gestures in front of your solar plexus.
- Hold one arm or both arms down at your side when they are not in use. Then begin a gesture from there.
- Hold something invisible in one hand for security, like a pen you can't click. Don't hold papers.

Move your lower body

- Move toward your audience—to connect with them—and back—to give them the floor.
- Lean toward your audience. Literally incline your body forward.
- Move sideways to shape your space.
- Don't let a podium break your connection with the audience. Stand beside it and move behind it if you want to look at your notes. Then come back out to the side.