

MODULE 4 - EMOTION, ENTHUSIASM AND ENTERTAINMENT

Public speaking used to be considered a subject which could be taught in the same way as, for example, French or mathematics: you learnt the basic structure and then you practised it. That is exactly what we are going to do in this Module. Success or failure was assessed by looking at how many of the basic rules were applied and with what success, in exactly the same way as an examiner might assess a French oral examination. You know that there is a definite structure to the French language, but did you know that there is also a definite structure to public speaking? There is one big difference: the rules for successful public speaking are far, far fewer and far, far simpler. No doubt those of you without a gift for languages will be heaving a huge sigh of relief at this point.

OVERALL POINTS TO CONSIDER

You must put emotion into your presentations.

1. You are not making a dry, factual presentation on an arcane point of economic policy, or giving a statistical analysis. You will be giving talks intended to be of interest to the man in the street. Just stating raw facts is not enough.
2. The reason it is not enough is that human beings have emotions as well as brains. We have already seen that you have to appeal to their intellect. If you ignore the emotional part of their make-up, you have immediately sacrificed 50% of your appeal.
3. In fact, you will have sacrificed more than 50% of your appeal because the next crucial point to remember is that your lay audience has chosen to be there because at least in part they consider your talk to be a form of entertainment. They will, in the main, be attending your talk in their spare time. However much they come expecting hard information, they will also expect to be entertained. To put this another way, how many people voluntarily sacrifice their spare time in order to be knowingly bored stiff for thirty minutes. People only do this when visiting unpopular relatives or undertaking some other task imposed by a sense of duty. By no stretch of the imagination does attending a talk given by a therapist fall into this category. Therefore, you must entertain.
4. Let's separate emotion and entertainment for a moment – don't panic, we are not going to advise you to tell jokes or tap dance – and finish talking about emotion. We will deal with entertainment below.

We've explained that people are listening to you because they want to hear more than a long recitation of facts. In other words, they want their emotions engaged as well as their minds, though they may not be aware of this. From your point of view, this is easy to achieve. Quite simply, you put some emotion into your talk. This doesn't mean over-the-top drama: it can be something as simple as you saying, from the heart, that you have seen your therapy produce good results and you *know* it works.

This may seem an obvious thing to do, but one of the main mistakes made by nervous speakers is to withdraw into themselves, to try to hide themselves behind a shell. This is usually because they are afraid that if they put something of their real selves into the talk, in other words, show emotion, they will be even more hurt and embarrassed if the talk is badly received.

In fact, hiding emotion is pretty well guaranteed to ensure that the talk does go badly. To repeat - the audience is not there to listen to a dry and boring talk, they need and want to respond with their emotions as well as their minds. They have a need and you must feed it. The food you offer as a gift is your own emotions. They will reach out and accept this gift, as long as it is genuine. Thus, you have established rapport with your audience.

So, if you believe in your therapy, as presumably you do, say so. Say so from the heart. If you talk about past cases and you feel sad, sympathetic or delighted with the results, say so and let your emotions show.

Don't forget, also, that the public are very aware that therapists generally believe in a holistic approach to medicine. That is one of the main reasons why the general public has turned to complementary medicine in a big way, because they know they will be treated as a whole person instead of just one or two symptoms unrelated to their general health or lifestyle. They will expect you as a therapist to be aware of their emotional life and if they come to you as a client, to take it into consideration. There will be an assumption that you yourself are emotionally open, not closed and stiflingly scientific in your approach.

Thus, it is crucial for you as a therapist to give presentations reinforcing this belief. We have no doubt that it is true – that you are indeed a warm and caring person, or you would not be a therapist, but the message is —you must open yourself up and show this.

Now, you may be acutely shy or perhaps come from a scientific or academic background where introducing emotion into a talk is anathema. Nevertheless, it is something all good speakers do, and it is particularly important for you as a therapist to do it. It is not, as we have said, at all hard to do. Simply, if you feel something, let it show.

One interesting point follows from this which you may find reassuring. If the emotion you are feeling is fright at facing an audience, why not say so? The underlying principle still applies. You are showing emotion. You are being open and genuine. Far from despising you, almost every person sitting there listening to you will immediately put themselves in your situation, know exactly how you are feeling and react with sympathy. By telling the truth, you have established rapport with your audience, which is what you set out to do. Stage fright, therefore, far from being a disaster, can be an absolute godsend as long as you are honest about it. Try and hide

it, and the audience will immediately sense something is wrong, but not know what. They will just know that you are putting on an act. There will be no rapport. So – if you are nervous, say so. You could even write a phrase beforehand to cover the situation. It might be something like, “I’m a qualified therapist not a professional public speaker so the first thing I have to tell you tonight is that I am petrified standing here talking to you.” That will gain you sympathy and probably a few laughs. You could then go on to say something like, “But I believe strongly in what I do and I’m delighted you’ve given me this chance to share it with you.” Then you launch into your prepared talk. Problem solved. Even if you fluff some of your speech, the audience knows why and are on your side.

Now we’ll move on to looking at another element of the good speech – enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm

In a later module of this course you will learn the tricks of the trade which will enable you to write an interesting speech. You can, however, write the best and wittiest speech in the world but if it is delivered in a flat monotone, it will fall flat.

1. Something we will discuss in greater detail later is that you need to alter the tone and speed of your voice. Let’s take that one stage further and look at what lies behind this – enthusiasm. You need to be, or at least to sound, enthusiastic about what you are saying. Why, after all, should someone take an interest in what you are saying if you yourself don’t sound interested in it?
2. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines enthusiasm as "intense enjoyment, interest or approval. keenness". Perhaps we could add the word "zest" to that .
3. Another way to look at it is that you must aim to make your audience catch alight with what you are saying. To do this, you yourself need to be alight with enthusiasm. Put some zest into your talk. If you are subdued, your audience will be also. Allied to that zest is belief. You must come across as believing what you are saying. The two allied together will come across as enthusiasm.
4. Enthusiasm comes from inside yourself whether it is real or false enthusiasm. Real enthusiasm is, of course, there already. As a therapist you are almost certainly enthusiastic about your particular therapy. You believe in it. You believe it can do good and help people. It does, however, have outward manifestations and that is what you need to look at in order to improve your performance.
5. False enthusiasm can be generated. All it needs is a little energy. Do you imagine salesmen are generally enthusiastic about the vacuum cleaners or double glazing they sell? What they have understood is that energy, plus the outward signs of enthusiasm, engage the interest of those to whom they are speaking.

Now, we are not advocating false enthusiasm. We are assuming that you are indeed genuinely enthusiastic about your therapy and that you believe in what you say. There are two particular sets of circumstances, however, in which you might want to look at your ability to be and to appear enthusiastic. These are:

- Where you are tired, run down, upset or have another good and temporary reason for not wanting to give that talk on that particular occasion.

This is simply the result of circumstances. We have all been in this situation. You arranged this talk months ago and you were quite looking forward to it because the audience will be middle aged women who are likely to be sympathetic to what you have to say, and inclined to give you a good reception. It is also likely that a number would approach you afterwards asking for a consultation.

On the day of the talk, however, you got up to find that your beloved cat had died. You had a row with your partner over breakfast and when you went to wash your hands you found the water board had cut off the water supply because someone had drilled through the mains pipe outside your front door. Things were no better at work. Your first two clients failed to show up. Your third, an initial consultation, was a waste of time. Your favourite client, who had been making such good progress, arrived in a state of gloom because she felt that all her problems had come back. Your attempts to tell her that everyone has ups and downs and that she was genuinely making progress fell on deaf ears. By tea time, you were badly stressed. You set out for the venue at which you were going to give the talk but you became stuck in traffic so you didn't have time to read through your notes. The chairman of the group running the talk introduced you and there you were on the stage, expected to radiate enthusiasm for your therapy: expected to stand there as a contented and well-balanced example of practising what you preach.

Well, perhaps it isn't always as bad as that, but you get the general idea.

Of course, your audience don't know about your bad day. All they know is that a therapist has been booked to speak to them, they have made the effort to turn up (and possibly pay money for doing so) and that they have an expectation as to what you will be like. You will be caring. You will be knowledgeable. You will be calm and well balanced. You will know your subject and you will be full of enthusiasm for its benefits. You have to deliver these expectations or you might as well not bother to turn up at all.

Somehow you either have to whip up the necessary enthusiasm or at least put on a convincing show of it. In circumstances such as these we do not consider it deceit because you normally are enthusiastic about what you do. We would rather call it first aid – first aid for you, to help you carry out a task you have agreed to

undertake, namely, to deliver a successful speech and to satisfy the audience's expectations.

In these circumstances, there are certain steps you can take both to boost your level of enthusiasm to something like its normal levels and also to give the appearance of enthusiasm, which is just as important.

- Where you are enthusiastic but have difficulty in displaying this.

This is the result of habit and training. Children are naturally enthusiastic. Somewhere in life you learned to hide your feelings, either most of the time or whenever you find yourself in what you see as a threatening or difficult situation.

This is not the subject of this particular course but if you habitually do this, we would recommend that you undertake some self development to find out why this happens and to undo this earlier training. It can only make your life more difficult. The ability to be carefree and spontaneous is something we should have throughout our lives. If you have problems with this, don't just suffer: approach an appropriate therapist for help.

Other people have no problems whatsoever about revealing their feelings normally, but as soon as they get onto a stage they are literally petrified. They stand there, rigid as a board, arms clamped firmly in one position, their voice a monotone and their eyes glued onto their script. How enthusiastic are you likely to appear if that is the way you behave.

This is, of course, stage fright. This is something we will wean you away from during this course, but one thing you can do while you are discovering that your talks are improving is to act. Act enthusiastic. As it's an act, if it goes wrong all that has happened is that the act has failed. You yourself haven't blown it. It was the act which was wrong. In fact, this particular act has an extremely high success rate. If you are enthusiastic, or appear to be, people will respond to this even if they don't agree with what you are saying. Have you ever listened to a rabid football fan discussing his hero, or a Leonardo di Caprio fan discussing Titanic? You might raise your eyes and attempt to change the subject, but there will be a slight smile on your face as you do so. You are responding to that enthusiasm. Moreover, it is a positive response, not the negative response that most people who suffer from stage fright fear.

False enthusiasm sustained over a long period is (a) deceitful, (b) almost impossible to sustain, and (c) doesn't stand up to the test of time. In other words, people will see through it sooner or later. That doesn't matter to you because all you are doing on these initial occasions when you use it is to demonstrate to yourself that your rigid, self protective stance doesn't work but that a show of enthusiasm does. Once you've seen that for yourself, you will relax and it will happen naturally.

Enthusiasm and motivation

However enthusiastic you do or don't feel, remember one thing. Enthusiasm has the power to motivate. One trick, therefore, is to keep thinking of the end result. You believe in what you do. If you can motivate just one person to come and see you, you might help them regain their health or prevent harm from happening. Keep that thought in mind. Enthusiasm is not just a means of ensuring that your talk doesn't fall flat: it is about introducing them to your therapy – for their benefit. Do you want to do that? Of course you do. By acknowledging that, you are more than half way there. Enthusiasm, therefore, is not just about what you are feeling but about the effect you are having. If you are enthusiastic, this will be a beneficial effect. That makes it worth all the effort.

Enthusiasm and energy

As a therapist, no matter what your therapy, it is certain that you recommend exercise to your clients, both to increase their general health and well being but also as a means of their gaining energy. It is a truth you soon discover if you take even a minimal amount of exercise – exercise doesn't drain you of energy, it gives you more.

It is the same with enthusiasm. It might require a little bit of effort to whip up that enthusiasm on a bad day or to act enthusiastic, but soon the enthusiasm itself will generate energy within you. The initial effort will be replaced with a feeling of alertness and well being. You become involved in what you are saying, instead of allowing anxieties to divert your energy in less constructive directions. Trust us when we say this. Energy follows enthusiasm as surely as night follows day.

Acting enthusiastic

Here is what to do if you need to put on an act of enthusiasm. You will also find this short list useful if you are enthusiastic but are not sure that this is coming across to your audiences. The list is short because you only have to do a very few things in order to be and appear to be enthusiastic. These are:

- Smile. This has a number of effects. The first of these effects is on you. Smiling will actually make you feel better. We're not talking about a gentle twitch of the lips here, but a genuine wide smile. Try it now and see how you feel. Smiling has a physiological effect on the body which results in that feel-good feeling. There is some medical evidence which suggests that laughter, which is just smiling carried to another degree, can even have a measurable effect on the body's ability to heal itself. There are therapies centred on getting people to smile and laugh. That is its effect on you. Now let's look at its effect on other people.

Most people will react automatically to a smile (as long as it's not totally out of context) with a smile of their own. That is exactly the response you want to generate.

Because they are smiling, they themselves will start to feel good. They are feeling good because of something you are doing. You have, therefore, connected with them, created a rapport. They will anticipate what you are going to do and say next with some pleasure because you have already made them feel good.

Smiling is also good body language in that you are saying subliminally that you are open and approachable.

- Raise your chin. If you are looking at the ground or even at your script, you will not look open and approachable, you will feel less enthusiastic and you will not generate enthusiasm. By raising your head and your chin, especially if you smile at the same time, you will feel good and look good.
- Raise your voice. Have you ever heard anybody being enthusiastic in a whisper? By doing this, the audience doesn't have to strain to hear you, and you will be committed to projecting yourself and your personality. Speaking softly is a form of cowering, hoping you will not be too noticeable, and thus any mistakes you make will not be too noticeable. Commit yourself. Raise your voice. If you're going to make mistakes, you'll make them anyway and they will be just as noticeable.

Raising your voice has another effect on your levels of enthusiasm. In order to speak loudly you have to breathe more deeply. This will fill your lungs with air and will both help to calm you and will increase your own feeling of well being. The calmer you feel, the more your own natural enthusiasm will show through. The acting then becomes reality.

- Emphasise some of your words. You will need to do this for other reasons, which we will explain later in the course, but emphasising your words is a trick which prevents you standing there with your shoulders hunched and speaking in a monotone. "I am *delighted* to be here today." "I'm *positive* you will see the benefits of the therapy I am about to describe to you."

Even this little trick makes you sound and feel more enthusiastic. You are putting some emotion, something of yourself into your words and not just reading them from a script. It works wonders.

- Stand up straight. There is actually a correct way to stand up straight. Start by bending your knees a little and pulling in your stomach as tight as you can. Then raise your rib cage. You'll find your shoulders are going back. Make a conscious effort to relax them and pull them back further. Take a deep breath. Straighten your knees. Now raise your head so that your chin is slightly in the air. This is a good, straight standing position. It looks good and it feels good.

Ideally, you will maintain this throughout your talk but if your normal posture is not as good as it should be, you might find this hard. However, if you hold this position for even a few seconds at the beginning you will feel far more confident. Once again,

whatever you say will come out with more conviction because you have physically adopted a strong body language posture. You are, literally, standing firm behind your convictions. A timid person does not stand up straight. A timid person does not generate enthusiasm. By standing up straight, you look and feel like a confident person, not a timid one.

- Introduce some gestures into your talk. Enthusiasm, by its very nature, involves someone being carried away by emotion. You will not give this effect if your hands only move to turn over the pages of your speech.

A warning here – make the gestures at the appropriate time and put your heart and soul into them. We are not talking about flamboyant gestures: waving one finger in the air can be quite adequate. What you are doing is unlocking any rigidity of posture you may have.

Do this at the same time that you emphasise a word. “I have seen the benefits *so many* times.” On the words “so many”, raise one hand slightly to emphasise the point. That is all it takes. This needn’t be spontaneous. You can practice it beforehand and even put a note in your script at the appropriate point to remind yourself. This is standard practice for many people who speak in public.

Obviously, don’t gesture unless there is a word or phrase which needs emphasising. That is, and looks, false.

Enthusiasm and falsity

Don’t overdo it. If you feel you are having problems showing enthusiasm, start with small changes to your behaviour and appearance (apart from the smile which can rarely be too wide or open). Don’t wave your arms around wildly or punch the air. An understated gesture is far more effective. If you attempt to do something which is not in your character, this will come across to the audience.

You might say that that is exactly what we are asking you to do by learning these tricks. Not at all. We have already agreed that you are genuinely enthusiastic. What we are doing here is allowing you to let this shine through.

Let’s now move on to one aspect of public speaking which terrifies most people and that is the need to entertain your audience, to stop them yawning or walking out.

Entertainment

If you feel able to stand up in public and tell jokes you are probably not doing this course and probably don’t need to, although we would hope you’d find other techniques we describe useful.

We're going to assume that you are not one of these people. You are, in fact, a normal therapist who isn't at ease in front of an audience. So, we are going to suggest the following rule: don't tell jokes.

Jokes, unless delivered with panache, can fall flat. Also, even the most experienced comedian has told his best and most successful jokes to an audience which has responded with stony faces. This is because humour is highly personal: what one person finds funny, another person does not. Telling jokes, therefore, unless you are very confident and sure of your delivery, is an unnecessary risk.

Most people assume that entertainment is causing your audience to roll around in fits of laughter. Let's therefore look at what we mean by entertainment.

Entertainment is about creating enjoyment and pleasure. Now, enjoyment and pleasure don't have to involve laughter and jokes. Listening to music can be enjoyable. Looking at a beautiful sunset can be pleasurable. What entertainment is, in its broadest sense, is knowing that each human being, the people in your audience, have five senses, not just one, and feeding the audience's senses with good sensations.

This might sound rather daunting for the amateur public speaker but in fact it is reassuring, because there is one thing which causes sensory starvation and that is to stand stock still throughout your talk. That is boring to watch. It doesn't engage your audience's visual sense at all after the first few minutes, when they have looked at you, assessed your clothes, noted the colour of your hair etc. After that, there is nothing new for them to look at. It doesn't involve their other senses at all, because they are not required to involve themselves in any activity. All it involves is their sense of hearing.

You can see from this that if you rely on appealing to only the one sense, hearing, you are putting an enormous burden on yourself. Your spoken presentation has to be brilliant, to make up for the lack elsewhere. That is shooting yourself in the foot.

So, don't stand still and rigid while you give your presentation. Move around the stage. Move your arms – make gestures. Point to things. Scratch your head. Reach out your hand to the audience at appropriate points. Even by doing this, you will improve your rapport with the audience because you are engaging their eyes. They will follow your gestures and thereby you are ensuring that they are still engaged with you and your presentation.

Thus, standing still, which is a typical and instinctive reaction to fear, is exactly the wrong thing to do in these circumstances.

So you can see that by employing this one, easy technique, you can improve your performance. Obviously, you mustn't overdo it and turn yourself into a caricature of John Cleese, but we will be going in to what are and are not appropriate gestures later in this course in more detail. For now, just remember the basic principle – feed the audience's eyes. Give them something new to look at by moving your body. This will

not detract from your words, far from it. It will keep the audience's attention and stop their minds switching off. Thus, in an unobtrusive way, you are entertaining them.

You can also engage their other senses by giving them the opportunity to participate. Ask them questions which involve their raising their hands in reply. Make the questions sufficiently broad to ensure that at least some will raise their hands. "How many of you have had an aromatherapy session (or whatever your particular therapy is)?" What you are doing is giving them a reason to move. Some of the audience will raise their hands. The rest will move their heads, looking for and at those who have raised their hands. These questions, therefore, create a win-win situation. Everyone in the audience moves. They cease to be passive listeners to your presentation and become participants. They are being entertained, by other members of the audience. Their own natural curiosity will ensure that they look around.

You can also use your words to entertain. Again, we reiterate that this does *not* mean telling jokes. It is far simpler and far less risky than that. It simply means varying the pitch and speed of your voice.

One of the most common faults of nervous public speakers is to speak in a virtual monotone. You are probably not aware of doing this. It is the oral equivalent of standing stock still with fear. You are simply reducing the level of your activity in the hope of avoiding disaster. Again, we will go into this in far more detail later in the course, but for now, just remember this point.

Summing up

Let your own natural enthusiasm for the therapy you practise shine through any natural reserve or fear. Move around the stage. Move your arms. Vary the tone and speed of your voice. These small changes will light up a presentation and turn a mediocre one into one which the audience will enjoy and remember.

ASSIGNMENT

Using the script you have been developing in Modules 2 and 3, indicate where and what type of emotion, enthusiasm or entertainment you could include. This can be in the form of an attached essay or in note form, eg, use the letter A on the script, and then on a separate piece of paper, explain what you would do at that point. Use your imagination (without being silly!) – the object is to make you think about ways in which you can add another dimension to your written script.