



**Helping individuals and companies
break out of their comfort zones
to become more successful**

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Think of Yourself as a Speaker

Often, people tell me, "I'm not a speaker so I don't have to think about presentation skills." I disagree. I think we are all speakers – yes, even you.

Whether you talk to a small or large audience or in a corporate, academic or community setting, you are a speaker. If you give an update to a project team, speak up at a neighborhood meeting or organize a fundraiser, you are a speaker. If you give a toast at a wedding, conduct orientation for new employees or train someone on a new process, you are a speaker. If you teach a class, lead a conference call or accept a community award, you are a speaker. If you answer a question at a meeting, attend a networking event or interact with potential clients, you are a speaker.

The point of thinking of yourself as a speaker is not to make you crazy. The point is for you to become conscious of your power to communicate. Public speaking is a skill – it's not magic or a special gene. And as a skill, it can be learned and improved. You already have knowledge and expertise; public speaking gives you the ability to communicate that knowledge and expertise effectively to others. And in so doing, you can have a positive impact on your career, your self-confidence and your community.

One of the first people that I coached was a man who had to give the toast at his brother's wedding. One of my most recent coaching clients was a woman who had to lead a teleseminar with a global audience for a major client. Both of these people are speakers, even though that is not their primary job description. They had something to share with other people and communicating effectively made a difference in their personal and business relationships.

Just by thinking of yourself as a speaker, you benefit from what I call the Focus Effect. Earlier in my career, I worked in process improvement and was often called in to analyze a business process that was inefficient, costly or time-consuming. I found that just by asking people who were involved in the process to focus on what they were doing and how, the process often improved because they were more conscious of their actions.

Likewise, when you think of yourself as a speaker, you begin to focus on what and how you communicate. And as you pay more attention to your communications, you become more conscious of what works well and more able to improve what doesn't.

The next time you have the opportunity to speak or present, think of yourself as a speaker. Doing so will help you eliminate the barriers to letting your voice be heard and make a positive contribution to your professional and personal success.

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