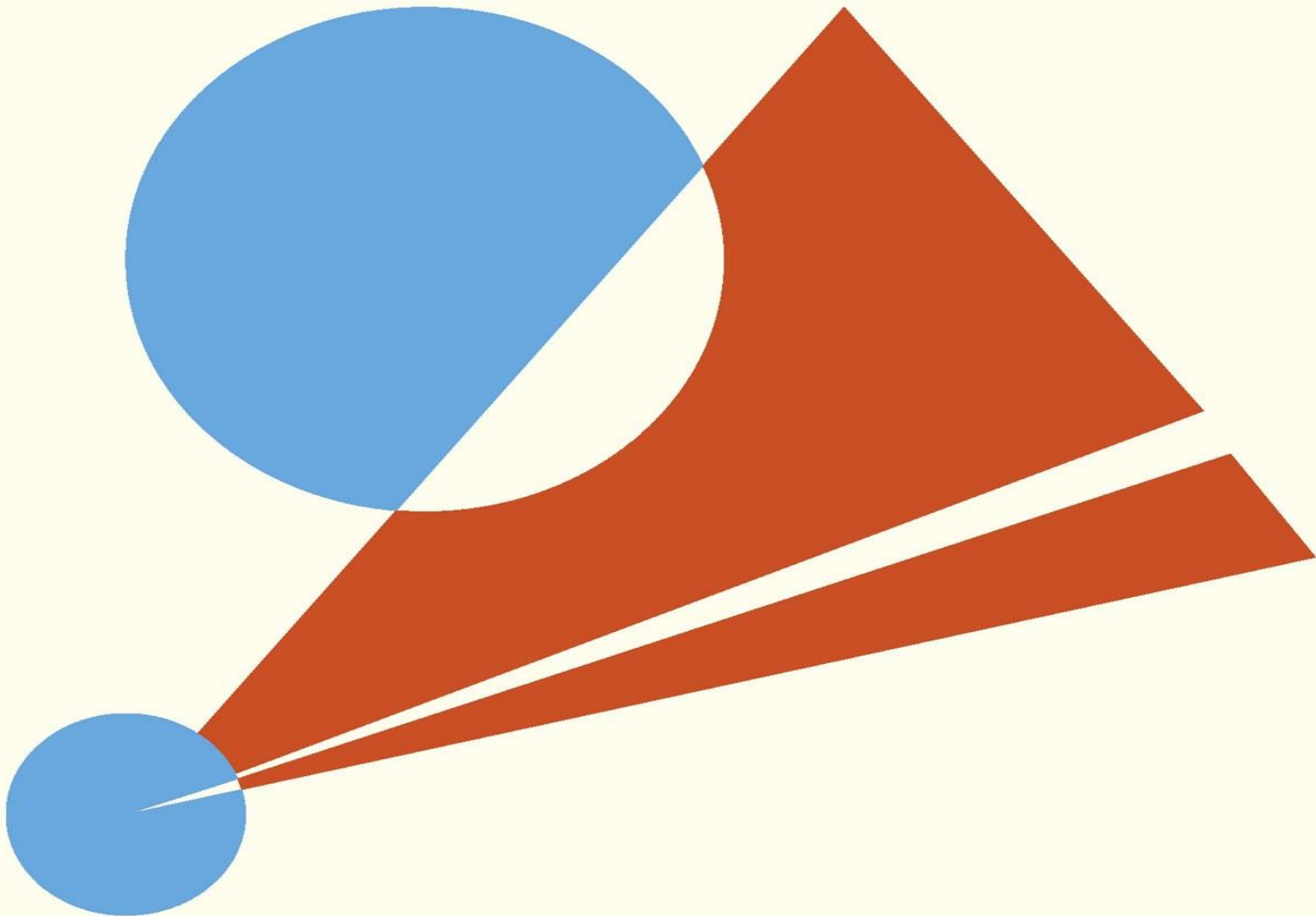


Penguin Business Experts



Nick Gold

Speaking With Confidence





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SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE



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About the Author

Nick Gold is the Managing Director of Speakers Corner, a leading global speaker bureau, which over twenty years has built a network of over 7,500 speakers internationally. He is Director of Speaking Office, a keynote speaker management company. He is the president of the International Association of Speaker Bureaus (IASB) and was formerly the Chairman of the European Association of Speaker Bureaus. Nick has spoken at major industry events including Confex and The Business Show and has been published extensively across UK media outlets including the *Telegraph*, *City AM* and *GQ*.

To my dad, Lawrence Gold, who will
forever be in my thoughts and gave me
the belief and guidance to have a voice
and speak with confidence

Introduction

You *can* speak with confidence. If you follow the pointers and tips in these coming pages, I have no doubt you'll become an accomplished public speaker. That may sound like a bold assertion but I'm absolutely convinced it's true. Everybody can learn to speak well.

Despite this, many people are scared of getting up to talk in front of an audience. There's even a technical term for this: glossophobia. It's so common that it's believed to affect up to 75 per cent of the population, with an estimated 10 per cent of those at the more extreme end of the spectrum. If you are one of the many who make up this number, it may strike you that your glossophobia is insurmountable. It isn't. With the right preparation and support, you can overcome your barriers and stumbling blocks. In the following chapters I will help you look at speaking in a fresh way that will dissipate much of the anxiety and put you in control. I say 'much', rather than 'all', because some nerves are a good thing. Harnessed in the right way, they bring the necessary energy to your performance. They help you to focus and connect.

One of the fundamentals of successful public speaking is to understand that, no matter how good at it you become, it's always the audience that is the star. They're the focus. Not you. Later on in this book, I'll explain how this works and how to use it to your advantage – because by truly understanding this, you can boost your self-confidence and performance. I'll also be exploring why public speaking is

most definitely not one-way traffic. The best speeches mirror a conversation, and actively provoke interaction and reaction. The goal should always be to:

- engage with your audience, and
- deliver a lasting impact.

Time spent in front of an audience actually delivering a speech is only part of the picture. So, I'll be breaking down the speechmaking process into 'before', 'during' and 'after', all of which are vital stages in ensuring your message hits home. This includes aspects such as creating an environment in which you feel comfortable. A large degree of success comes down to proper preparation.

One of the notable things about wonderful speakers is that there are no stereotypes. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and their personalities vary enormously. In fact, their individualism makes them good at what they do. That's because being true to yourself is at the core of successful public speaking. Which is all the more reason to believe me when I say that anyone can do it.

You can do it.

I have been fortunate to pursue and enjoy a career that has immersed me in the world of speaking. I am the Managing Director of Speakers Corner, which has grown to become one of the biggest speaker bureaux in the world. We work on more than 1,000 events a year, and have over 7,000 speakers on our books. Alongside Speakers Corner, I co-founded the speaker management business Speaking Office, with my brother Tim Gold and Michael Levey. My work is all about supporting people to overcome any fears or barriers they might have, and to make the most of their talent.

So, as well as my thoughts and theories, this book is packed with insights from some of the fantastic speakers it's my pleasure to work with on a regular basis. What they have to say is honest, illuminating and very practical. This

is a golden opportunity to learn from some masterful exponents of speaking who have been generous in sharing their 'trade secrets'.

Together, let's banish glossophobia.

It's time for you to become a glossophile, blessed with the skills and confidence to hold an audience in the palm of your hand.



1. Show and Tell

Most of us have an innate fear of public speaking. We worry we may not be up to it; that we'll freeze, stumble over our words, bore the audience or make mortifying mistakes. We will learn, throughout this book, that this fear may never completely subside. But you will learn how to control it, work with it, and use it to your advantage when speaking in front of groups. The title of this book is *Speaking with Confidence*, but that is not to suggest that speaking is something only the super-confident can do. Quite the contrary: speaking is something everyone can do, whether you feel confident or not to start with. I want you to believe in yourself. Because you can do it – and do it well.

Step 1: Belief

We all start life speaking confidently. And that undoubtedly includes you. But, over time, as we get older – and supposedly wiser – we acquire a tendency to feel more apprehensive about public speaking. Our mature, rational brain suppresses the imaginative capabilities of childhood and allows fear and reserve to creep in.

We were all at primary school once. Back then, we used to be excited by Show and Tell, when we could bring in our favourite thing to talk about. We'd stick our hand in the air and wave it about frantically, hoping to catch the teacher's eye while willing ourselves to be picked. If we were lucky enough to be chosen, we'd rush to the front of the class and proceed to regale and entertain our peers with stories of why the particular item held a special place in our life and why it was so important. Each of us, in our delight to show and tell, was a natural orator, entertaining and engaging an audience eager to hear more.

Looking back at these carefree situations, we should ask ourselves, why were we able to do this? What gave us the confidence to stand up and speak without weeks of preparation, stress and overthinking? Even more pertinently, what kept our audience interested and engaged in our most prized possession? For any would-be speaker, in any situation, the answer to this is the first step in giving yourself the best chance of success: belief.

The person delivering the Show and Tell is talking about something they believe in, something they care about with genuine passion. They use their own words, rather than words read from a prompt or written by someone else. This allows them to bring to life a story that is *their* story, suffused with their own experience and personality.

CASE STUDY

Will Butler-Adams: Natural enthusiasm

Will Butler-Adams, boss of Brompton Bicycle and Brompton Bike Hire, and a well-respected public speaker, is a fan of this sort of approach. He warns not to 'overly curate' your words, so that your natural self will shine through. 'Because if you over-curate, it's like you're reading from a textbook – and it's stilted, and it's not you. So,

if what you're saying isn't you, then you're probably not going to be relaxed doing it.'

In this way, enthusiasm is not an act or forced. It's a natural enthusiasm that's intoxicating and outward-facing. Which means that the audience, in the grip of your passion, comes along for the ride. They want to be part of the adventure.

I appreciate that all of the above can be easily dismissed or ignored. After all, I'm talking about Show and Tell at primary school. A time when our lives lay ahead of us and we were unburdened by the stark realities of the adult world. And before we worried about being judged by our audience. Before we had to consider how the way we act in front of other people might have a massive impact on our career prospects, credibility and reputation.

It's no surprise, therefore, that adults see greater risk in public speaking than our younger selves would have done. However, while I think we should all aspire to keep hold of the enthusiasm for life and adventure we had as children, that's not the main point of conjuring up memories of Show and Tell. Show and Tell is to remember that we all have the belief in ourselves; sometimes we just need to rediscover it.

Step 2: Ownership

The aspect I'd now like you to zero in on is the ownership of the content. The way your younger self would have passionately owned what you said to your classmates about something that really meant something to you – whether that was a favourite *Star Wars* toy, an idolized pop singer's autograph, or the chewed-up frisbee you threw time and again for your adored family pooch.

What does this mean for the speaker who wants to stand and deliver with confidence? It means you must believe in – and, more importantly, *own* – the content that you will be

sharing with your audience. And by content we don't necessarily mean the raw data. When it comes down to it, if you're delivering a business presentation, there's a strong possibility you won't be the only person involved in coming up with the content. Normally, at least some of the presentation will be created through teamwork. But even so, you can still own it. To do that, you have to wrap your own experiences and personality around the information so that it really means something to you. The more you as a speaker can tell your own stories, while weaving in the messages you need to deliver, the more engaged the audience will be.

Of course you must be careful not to shoehorn in messages or anecdotes in a manner that feels forced and jarring. But always remember, your audience wants stories. They are human beings, first and foremost, not just buyers, regulators or peers at an industry event, and they will respond positively to emotion they can relate to and invest in. Give them that and they'll be receptive to the messages you're aiming to deliver.

Moreover, and critically for a speaker, once you personalize your speech with your own stories, it becomes an event which you can embody completely. That will give you a massive confidence boost. As you move on to the comfortable ground of telling stories about yourself, of sharing glimpses of your personality, speech-giving nerves and fear will evaporate.

CASE STUDY

Gemma Milne: Combining insight and passion

Gemma Milne, a young Scottish science and technology writer and podcaster who has become an inspiring keynote speaker on subjects as diverse as biotech, health, advanced computing, space, energy and innovation in academia, was thrown in at the deep end

for her first speech when, only nine days into a new job, her boss asked her to give a presentation on innovation to 500 people in Dubai. As it was a 45-minute slot, she felt it would be boring to spend all that time focusing on the role of her company's innovation team. So she decided to combine one of her passions with some insight into what motivates people.

'I did a whole section on what is it that makes people tick? That's what's really important when it comes to advertising,' recalls Gemma. 'So I did a whole section on how I love maths, showing little number tricks. I was trying to show people how amazing maths is – my goal in life is to make everyone love maths – and I was basically saying, "This is what makes me tick, and understanding what makes other people tick is x, y, z."

'After I did that one, I got really good feedback. I knew that I wanted to be able to mix not necessarily my story, but awe and wonder and asking questions – and that sort of naive optimism that is very me – into any topic that I ever did. I had no interest in corporate presentations. Yes, I wanted to share my love of maths and share my sense of wonder, but I also knew that was what made me interesting.'

That self-awareness and passion has undoubtedly shaped Gemma's approach to her public-speaking career. 'I think sometimes with a talk people want, "What are the nine steps to ...?" Whereas with other kinds of talks it's, "How do I rethink this particular industry or concept or idea?"' she says. 'Anyone can learn how to do either, but I think your expertise and your preferences tend to make you fall into one. I certainly fall into the, "How do I plant a seed and make people think for themselves?" as opposed to, "Here's my experience, copy it."

What stories can you tell about yourself that feel genuine and share a glimpse of your personality? What are the parts of your life – hobbies, heroes or heroines – that you can talk about unselfconsciously? What would be your subject on *Just a Minute*? What makes you unique? Because these are

all the details that your listeners will find interesting and will make your speech memorable.

Speaking tips

- Be the passionate owner of your content.
 - Take your audience on a journey.
 - Channel your inner ‘Show and Tell’.
-

***PODCASTING IS LIKE THE HOLY GRAIL OF SELF-PROMOTION
WHICH CHANGED MY LIFE...***

GUESS HOW IT HAPPENED!



2. What's Your Brand?

The world is full of brands. They're everywhere. From the cars we drive to the clothes we wear; from the tech we use to the packaged food and drink we consume; from the financial products we buy to the airlines with which we fly. All of them are carefully managed brands, with qualities we recognize and relate to. And we all have our favourites. Brands we trust for their performance and dependability. Or connect with because they are in tune with our values, aspirations and the way we live our lives.

None of this happens by accident. Product and corporate brands are rigorously nurtured and promoted. Teams of people work hard on positioning and communication, making sure that what a brand stands for is expressed in the right way and delivered to the appropriate audience. For many companies, brands are their most valuable assets.

When the word 'brand' is applied to people, it's automatic to think of those celebrities who are instantly identifiable by their first names or nicknames. Beyoncé, Adele, Posh & Becks, Rihanna, Ant and Dec, CR7 ... These stars have a brand that reflects the persona they are trying to present to

the world. On hearing their names, we recognize not only who they are but also what they represent.

Personal brands aren't just the domain of celebrities. We each have our brand or persona. But we don't usually think of ourselves as a brand, because most of the time we are simply getting on with things, while feeling comfortable with who we are. We have our network of friends and family who know us, so we don't feel the need to position ourselves in order for them to recognize our 'brand attributes'.

Even in the more formal setting of work, we generally go into meetings on the understanding that we are representing the brand or values of the organization we work for. The people we meet may have already drawn conclusions or made presumptions about what we are doing in the meeting and how we are positioned. But when we are speaking in public, whatever the format or environment, we have the opportunity to go further. So, it's imperative that we position our personal brand in the right way, in order to lay the foundations for the message we are going to deliver in our speech.

The importance of body language

Effective public speaking hinges on far more than just the words you're going to say. Over the years, the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication has been discussed and debated, and it has been consistently agreed that body language matters a great deal. Our posture, gestures and other movements are instinctively read by others, and they make an impression on our audience when we speak in public.

Whether they like to admit it or not, people form judgements – on whether they like us or want to take on board what we have to say – based on our body language. And our tone of voice, too. The actual text of our speech

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