

Twenty-First Edition

# Principles of Public Speaking

Dakota Horn



# Principles of Public Speaking

Now in its 21st edition, this introductory public speaking textbook encourages the reader to see public speaking as a way to build community in today's diverse world.

Within a framework that emphasizes speaker responsibility, listening, and cultural awareness, this classic book uses examples from college, the workplace, and political and social communication to make the study of public speaking relevant, contemporary, and exciting. Balancing skills and theory, new author Dakota Horn provides expanded coverage of speaking anxiety and understanding and delivering digital presentations along with two new chapters on culture and diversity and diversifying speeches. Each chapter also contains in-class applied activities to support students' learning.

This textbook is ideal for general courses on public speaking as well as specialized programs in business, management, political communication, and public affairs.

An Instructor's Manual featuring discussion questions and guides, exercises, quiz questions, and suggestions and resources for syllabus design as well as PowerPoint slides is available at <https://www.routledge.com/9781032537634>

**Dakota Horn** is the Director of the Oral Communication Program and the Presentation Assistance Center at Bradley University, USA.



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# Principles of Public Speaking

*Twenty-First Edition*

DAKOTA HORN

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# Preview of Chapter Structure

The *Principles of Public Speaking* textbook should be an enjoyable read that allows you to explore your current public speaking abilities and equip you with new techniques and reinforce your strengths. Each chapter is structured similarly.

## **THINKING ABOUT MINDFULNESS**

Each chapter will start with a mindfulness exercise to get you in the right mind-set. Many of us deal with speech anxiety and communication apprehension. Before we learn about the content that helps, we should be grounded and focused on improving ourselves. We hope you find benefit in thinking about your mindfulness in each chapter.

## **TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

Each chapter has a Transferable Skill callout. These take common concerns or issues students see in the content and demonstrate how those skills transfer to a skill desired in the workplace. These concerns are collected and addressed by previous students.

## **SHORT CONTENT**

The text content is brief and to the point. Let's then take that extra time to write good speeches.

## **INFOGRAPHIC**

Each chapter starts with a brief highlight of the five key elements you should take from the chapter. This summarizes the main takeaways before you even start reading. How fun!

## **APPLICATION**

Each chapter has a brief activity or application to keep you on track to get the best out of your speech design process. They build on themselves as they go from chapter to chapter.

## **VISUALIZATION**

Where needed, each chapter has one or more rough artwork or visualizations created by the author to help explain the content. The intent is to show a simple visual of what the content means.



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# Preface

## WHAT'S NEW?

This book should be an enjoyable read that allows you to explore your current public speaking abilities, equips you with new techniques and reinforces your strengths. Some of the new additions to this text include opportunities to *Think About Mindfulness* with each chapter starting with a mindfulness exercise to get you in the right mindset. Many of us deal with speech anxiety and communication apprehension. We should be grounded and focused on improving ourselves before reading new content. We hope you find benefit in thinking about your mindfulness in each chapter. Public speaking is one of the most *Transferable Skills* someone can learn. Each chapter has a direct application of how the chapter content can be transferred to all walks of life. The chapters take common concerns or issues students see in the content and demonstrate how those skills transfer to a skill desired in the workplace. Reading textbooks can sometimes be a daunting task. This new edition includes a chapter introduction *Infographics* and *Visualizations* throughout to highlight five key elements you should take from the chapter before you read. This summarizes the main takeaways before you even start reading. Each chapter also has one or more rough artwork or visualizations created by the author to help explain the content. The intent is to show a simple visual of what the content means.

## APPLICATION

Each chapter has a brief activity or application to keep you on track to get the best out of your speech design process. With the abundance of resources available at the click of a button and the numerous textbooks that say the same thing, this edition finds a way to make the content stand out. This text brings a more

modernized interpretation of how to detail public speaking skills and connect that with students.

Public speaking textbooks often sound repetitive. It is time for one that stands out and takes the successes of the others such as a foundational approach to skills then incorporates practical application, and also asks “But why?” This edition revises and updates terminology to be more diverse, relevant, and specific to student needs. This book does as the title suggests, sets up the principles for what public speaking can be. The book explores the principles through modern application of how these theoretical components happen in real-life situations. This book stands out from other public speaking textbooks with its updated terminology, reconsideration of what it means to deliver a public speech, and an approach to make public speaking relevant to every reader’s professional and academic career.

## **ABOUT THE NEW AUTHOR**

Dr. Dakota Horn is the Director of the Oral Communication Program at Bradley University. He is the Director of the Presentation Assistance Center and program coordinator of the Instructional Design certificate program through the Office of Continuing Education. He also acts as the general education program assessment coordinator. He holds a doctoral degree in Teaching and Learning, specializing in instructional communication and design. His research interests focus on how best to create and deliver instructional messages, how to facilitate the most effective introductory communication course, and how to help students approach speech anxiety. Before joining Bradley University, he worked in government, with a Fortune 100 company, and with K-12 schools on curriculum and policy. Dakota has focused much of his research on instructional communication, general education, and accessibility in education.

We would like to thank Kathleen German for her contribution to *Principles of Public Speaking* over the past 13 editions.

## **THINK ABOUT MINDFULNESS**

Enter With Mindfulness

1. Before you enter a room, a new space, or even a new book, take a second to think about things.
2. Before reading each chapter of this book, pause and take one breath, be aware of the differences you might feel in each new space you enter.
3. When you leave that space, reflect on how you feel different.

# 1

# The Need for Public Speaking

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Studying Public Speaking

Orality in Public Life

Basic Elements in the Speech-Making Process

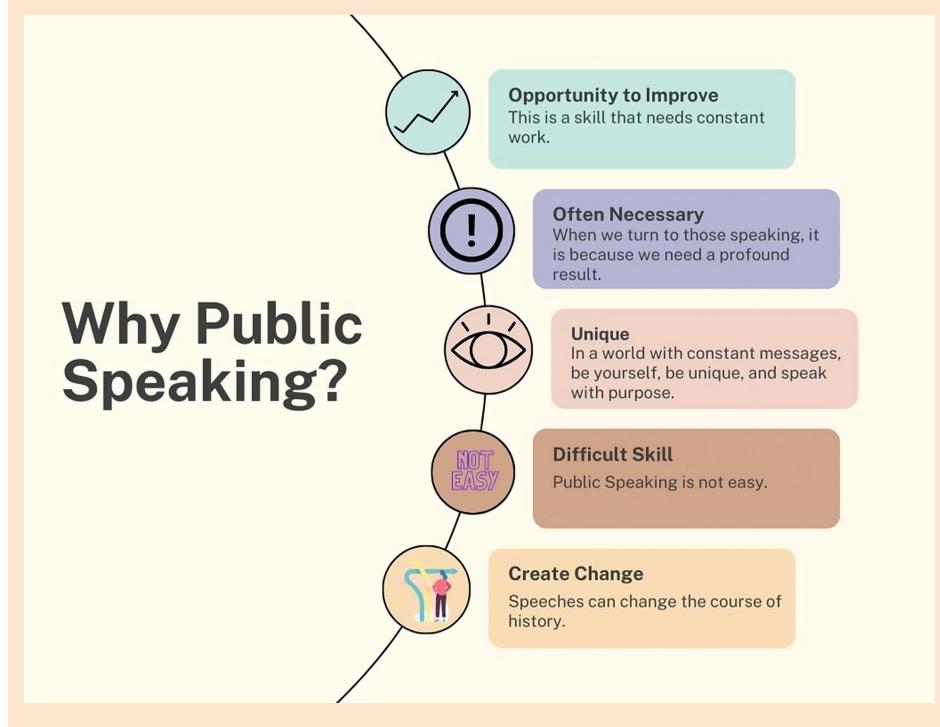
Ethical Responsibilities for Speakers

Why Public Speaking?

Your Responsibility

Assessing Your Progress

FIGURE 1.1 INFOGRAPHIC SUMMARIZING CHAPTER



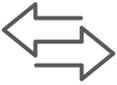
The speech classroom gives you a unique opportunity to practice your speaking skills on a live audience, get feedback from listeners, and become a more critical consumer of oral messages and a more expert critic of speech-making in general. Oral culture is dominated by public communication that is integrative, redundant, concrete, and situational. Speaking is a transaction involving a speaker, listeners, feedback, and a message within a context. Listeners judge speakers based on their perceptions of the speakers' good sense, goodwill, and good morals. In turn, speakers must learn to work within listeners' moral frames if they're to succeed.

Maybe you've been wondering, "Why should I work on communication? Why am I taking public speaking?" You've been communicating for most of your life already. You've probably been successful—you've gotten this far, after all—but you can do better. Like training for a sport or mastering a musical instrument, you can improve your communication skills with expert coaching and practice.

The purpose of this book is to guide you as you learn how to maximize your speaking skills, convey your ideas to others, and contribute to civil public discourse.

## STUDYING PUBLIC SPEAKING

First, public speaking is much more than just the oral rhetoric practiced thousands of years ago. This book talks about public speaking, taking ideas, and translating them to a targeted audience in real-time for the opportunity for feedback.



**Transferable Skill.** Whether using your vocal chords, sign language, visuals, or even recorded presentations, public speaking is a transferable skill. The fundamentals of Public Speaking include that it:

1. Has a message intended for a target audience
2. Has detailed organization to help an audience understand
3. Has a specific purpose
4. Has a variety of communication tactics depending on the person's ability and strengths.

When studying public speaking, you'll have the opportunity to engage other individuals while you strengthen your communication skills. Together, you can encourage each other and grow as public speakers. At first, the prospect of speaking in public might seem scary, and you'll probably make a few mistakes. That's natural, too. With the support of your classmates and your instructor, you'll learn how to channel your natural feelings of anxiety in positive directions so you appear poised and confident.

Here are some good reasons for studying and working on public speaking:

- **Your speech classroom is a laboratory: an ideal place for developing new skills.** Tell a story in the conclusion, use visual aids to help illuminate the message, or deliver a speech from in front of, rather than behind, a lectern. Your speech classroom is a comparatively safe environment for experimentation.
- **Take advantage of classroom practice to improve your speaking skills.** Practicing public speaking is every bit as important as practicing musical instruments, practicing for any sport, or practicing for job interviews. You can't just read about speaking and then do it well. Just like any other skill, speaking improves through the process of practice: in the privacy of your own room, in front of friends who are willing to humor you, in other classes, and of course, in your speech classroom. To improve your skills, get feedback wherever you can.
- **Work on your critical listening skills as well.** In your lifetime, you'll be exposed to thousands upon thousands of public messages in the form of speeches, classroom pitches, television ads, and social media. Practice in

- listening—trying to accurately comprehend and fairly evaluate what others say publicly—hones skills that are equally as important as speaking skills.
- **Learn to evaluate the speeches of others.** You can use this book as a tool for analyzing speeches you hear in person, access electronically, or find in print. As you critically review the speeches of others, you'll begin to notice techniques that work and others that fail. You can adapt strategies that have succeeded for other speakers. Ultimately, by practicing, listening, and evaluating other speakers, you will develop and refine the skills that will make you a more productive and successful member of society.

The study of **human speech** is a record of eloquent expressions of the human spirit. The greatest examples of **public speaking** endure well past the time and place they were given. Yes, things have changed drastically over the past several thousand years. However, audiences still find power in well-crafted speeches and arguments. Public speaking is about more than you and your problems. In times of crisis and public doubt, it is about the human condition. You take courses in public speaking to improve your self-confidence and sense of personal empowerment, of course, but also so that you can contribute to society. We begin by looking at the role of **orality** in life.

## ORALITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

So, then, you might ask, “Why all the stress on public speaking, on oral communication?” You can write a letter or email, or call or text someone on your phone. You can participate in group chat with other people who have the same interests that you do, bring up a podcast, or even email your congressional representative. So why do presidents still give televised speeches, teachers still offer classroom lectures, business teams still make oral presentations, and lawyers still make opening and closing courtroom speeches?

*There's something essentially, engagingly, powerfully human about speaking publicly to others.* That's it, period. As far back as we can trace the history, human beings have built their relationships with others—from parents to politicians—through face-to-face talk. As you speak, your movements, vocal tones of sadness or excitement, bodily tensions, and facial displays are directly accessible to those who watch and listen. What makes face-to-face, oral communication so important to groups? Media theorist Walter Ong has identified a series of characteristics of orality. These characteristics are shared by people who participate together in communication.

- **Speech tends to be integrative.** Speech integrates members of a society by identifying the values that people share. Speeches assemble groups who come together for common purposes. A group's traditional beliefs and values are usually reflected in public oral language.

- **Speech tends to be redundant.** You often employ repetition, saying the same thing in more than one way to help people keep up with the flow of the conversation.
- **Speech tends to be concrete.** References to particular places, events, and people help listeners visualize ideas. Speech is immediate, personal, and participatory—and therein lies its power.
- **Speech is situational.** It occurs in the here and now. At its best, a public speech deals with issues that arise in the daily lives of listeners.

So oral culture tends to be dominated publicly by speech communication that is integrative, redundant, concrete, and situational. All of these characteristics suggest that public speaking is a dynamic process.

## BASIC ELEMENTS IN THE SPEECH-MAKING PROCESS

Communication can be broken down into three definable models of communication: linear, relational/interactional, and transactional. This is not an exhaustive list of communication models, but they can be summarized in this fashion. Understanding the various models and their elements helps us understand the potential areas for improvement. Be critical of what the function of a communication model tells us about our own personal communication.

### Linear Model

Linear communication takes into account the rhetorical distribution of a message. This model of communication treats communication as a one-way sending of a message. There is one sender and one receiver. This model of communication finds its roots in mathematics and physics research. When speaking of linear communication, it was the basis of transmission of a signal that gives commands to most likely a computer or a radio transmission. Human communication is much more complex. For example, a message posted on a community bulletin board may or may not be received by any receiver. The message was transmitted, and communication had been accomplished. This is where this model stops in the explanation of how communication occurs. At that explanation, most individuals would take issue with the idea that communication is only sent in one direction. So that leads us to the next model.

### Relational/Interactional Model

The second iteration of communication models rejected the idea of a one-way transmission and decoding of messages. The next step was to add feedback as a key element in understanding how people made sense of messages. The word

communication comes from the Latin *communis*, which means common. The next models of communication focused on the commonness created in messages. Feedback was a crucial element in telling the transmitter how the messages were being received. These models consider the initial message but show a two-way back-and-forth exchange to help adjust and correct the messages being encoded and decoded. This makes more sense if you think about how we send and receive messages. But there seem to be more intricacies. This leads us to the next model.

## Transactional Model

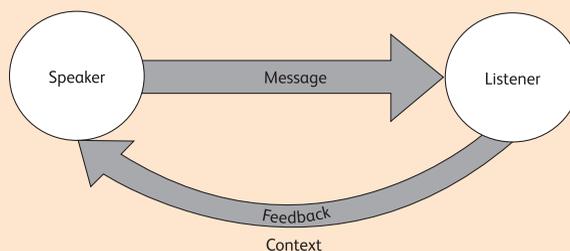
Communication models evolved over time from a mathematical transmission to receiving feedback to examine the process as a complex and dynamic system of communication features. The transactional model of communication clarifies communication as a process of shared messages and understandings between two or more individuals. More specifically, people encode and decode initial transmission messages in a constant process affected by various other elements. Then feedback occurs simultaneously allowing for changes in the message. Interference creates boundaries and obstacles for successful decoding. Communication is a transactional process involving the cognitive sorting, selecting, and sending of symbols in such a way as to help a listener elicit from their own mind a meaning or response similar to that intended by the communicator.

So, we can see public speaking is an **interactive process**. That is, it is a transaction or exchange among people in public settings. Five basic elements of speaking work together to create the speech process: a speaker, a message, a listener, feedback, and the context (see Figure 1.2). Let's consider each of these elements.

The **speaker** is the source of the message. As the primary communicator in the public speaking situation, the speaker brings an individual perspective,

### FIGURE 1.2 PUBLIC SPEAKING IS AN INTERACTIVE PROCESS

The basic elements of the transaction are the speaker, the message, the listener, and the context. Feedback refers to listeners' responses.



identity, and experience to the communication transaction. But keep in mind that they will be doing multiple tasks simultaneously.

The **message** comprises both the factual content of the speech and the speaker's attitudes and values on the topic. The message is transmitted by selecting words and ideas, and then arranging them in a particular pattern. The word choice, the repetition of information, the scaffolding of directions, the elimination of jargon, are a large majority of how you craft a message. There is no question that message creation can be the basis of a considerable number of misunderstandings. Other examples include speaking in a step-by-step manner, using appropriate pace, presenting logically, explaining content, allowing time to process, and various other examples provided above in the rhetorical message creation part of the literature review. The process of message creation is first accomplished by using rhetorical strategies that encourage understanding.

The **listener** (someone who receives and interprets your message) is also a partner in the speech transaction. You may think of public speaking as communication flowing in only one direction, from speaker to listener, but that is not an entirely accurate picture. Listeners bring prior knowledge, attitudes, and interests to the speech situation. They also provide verbal and nonverbal **feedback**, such as frowns, laughter, yawns, or questions. Feedback refers to messages your listeners send to you before, during, and after your speech. Audiences and speakers engage in a socialization process that involves audience members participating in behaviors that reduce uncertainty and allow the audience to gain understanding. From a transmission point, feedback is a signal that bounces off the receiver and allows the sender to correct or refine the signal. Communication not only involves how a sender puts together a rhetorical message transmission but also how to allow for feedback and respond to that feedback.

Speakers and listeners engage each other in a **context**. Some parts of the communication context are obvious, such as the physical setting in which the speech takes place. Other elements, however, are more subtle. The context of the speech also includes the social expectations and cultural rules that come into play when speakers and listeners interact. Often, notions and ideas are formulated at the onset of a communication relationship. However, those relationships change the environment in which the message is received. For example, a teacher on the first day of class and on the last day of class has a different relational context. The teacher on the last day of class has less burden in establishing a clear rhetorical message because the relationship with students has developed over time to better understand the delivery, content, and processes of the message creator (teacher). Even on something used for assessment of knowledge, the first test in a class is the hardest test because the students don't know the preference of the teacher, the word choice, the types of questions, how to prepare, the

focus of the exam. After the exam, the relational context in terms of clarity in teacher/student understanding has developed. The relational aspect could easily be included with people. How they each create meaning in the relationship and grow the relationship can be a determining factor. The context of instruction such as the environment bleeds into the channel as well. Considering what might be happening in their lives is another consideration. Keep in mind, that this is a brief primer on how the elements of the transactional model might be explained. Communication not only involves how a sender puts together a rhetorical message transmission but also how they maximize relational environments to encourage clarity.

## Interference

Barriers to communication can come in many forms. Receivers of messages are exposed to a great deal of signals in one environment and those signals can be combined, eliminated, emphasized, and create a new meaning. It is shortsighted to believe communication is accomplished with just the rhetorical devices determined in previous research. Communication can be affected by a number of things that can be out of the control of the sender of any message. Any communication model must examine the extent to which messages are interfered with. Interference can take place in three specific forms: physical, psychological, or semantic. Physical noise is the actual noise that can be heard and might overtake the message being heard or seen. Barriers that inhibit the ability to process the message include small print on a projection screen, the sound of loud cars, or people talking next to you. Psychological interference deals with cognitive or mental interference that might include one's bias, closed-mindedness to the conversation, or psychological factors unrelated to the speaker or message, such as hunger, boredom, or lack of focus. Semantic interference deals with the speaker and listeners assigning different meanings to the message. Examples include jargon, inside jokes, and cultural differences of the assigned meaning from those involved in the communication exchange. Communication not only involves how a sender puts together a rhetorical message transmission but also how they eliminate and minimize interference.

## Understanding Communication Models

Understanding the basic functions of the communication model gives an opportunity to understand how the basic elements function in the communication process. Consider a professor teaching an introductory class in social work. As a speaker, that instructor must convey a sense of professionalism (he or she knows the subject matter and participates regularly in professional activities as either a caseworker in the field or a scholar at conventions) and pedagogical expertise (he

or she knows how to explain complex ideas to people who are encountering them for the first time). If the lectures or discussions (the messages) are constructed clearly with factual information, a careful listener can take clear notes. As that last point suggests, the listener—say, you—does have an important role here. You engage in a reciprocal relationship, providing feedback by asking questions in class, responding to exam questions, and completing a course evaluation form—just as the professor agrees to read and fairly evaluate your class work.

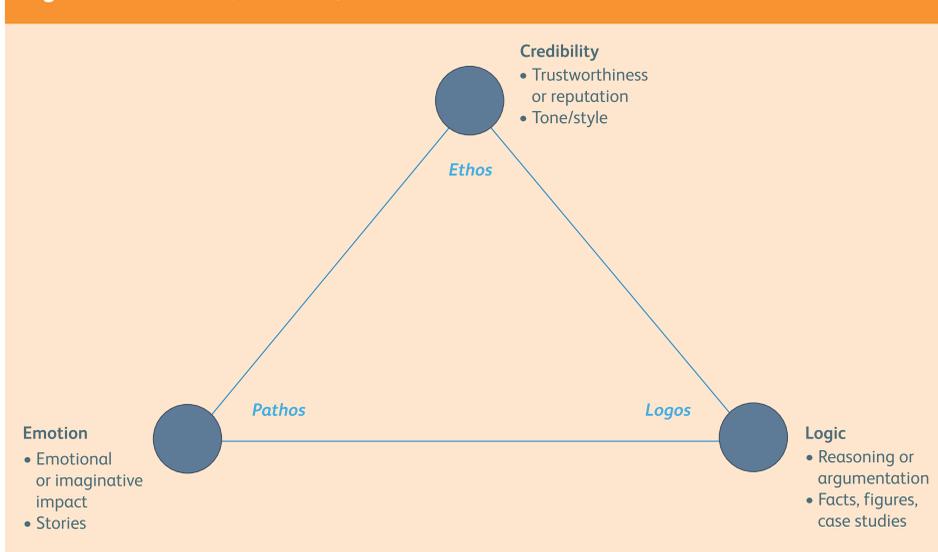
All of these elements interact to make the communication process happen. Be mindful of how each one influences the other. If you struggle with listening, how can you be more focused in your listening? If you struggle with crafting a message, how can you work on those skills? Think about how you can continually improve.

## ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPEAKERS

Because public speaking is an interactive process, you have certain responsibilities to your listeners—and they to you. Each time you speak publicly, you are contributing to a process of community building and affecting the lives of others. The act of speaking therefore always involves making ethical choices; that is the matter of **ethos** (see Figure 1.3).

Human beings have been intrigued by the process of communicating with others for thousands of years. The Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle identified three key factors that a speaker can control to influence others. He argued that *logos* (or the ability to develop logical claims with supporting evidence), *ethos* (or

Figure 1.3 ETHOS, PATHOS, LOGOS



the credibility generated by the speaker), and pathos (or the emotion the speaker can stimulate in listeners) were the primary factors for influencing listeners. These three factors are still important for public speakers today. Figure 1.3 displays their relationships.

The English word **ethics** is derived from the Greek word *ethos*. Ethos for the Ancient Greeks was an orientation to life that individuals shared with their community. The speaker was inextricably bound to others through reputation or credibility. To Aristotle, a speaker demonstrated ethos by sharing a bond with others in the community through good sense, goodwill, and good morals.

- Good **sense**: to demonstrate to others that one is talking from a position of experience and knowledge;
- Goodwill: to communicate an attitude of caring about oneself and, more importantly, about the audience members, their needs, their status, and their future;
- Good **morals**: to speak in the language of the beliefs and values of the listeners; to share their visions, their fears, and their hopes.

You will have an opportunity to engage on a level with the audience that social media does not allow. Emotions are such a powerful tool and you get to be in the room with an individual and share stories and engage with their reaction. Capturing the moment can be done with public speaking.

## The Moral Bases of Public Decision Making

The idea of public morality or **civility** therefore encompasses ethical commitments to community standards. To act in accordance with community beliefs and values, however, is to work within **moral frames**.

- 1 **To be successful, you must find some moral frame you share with your listeners.** You often speak to people whose backgrounds differ from yours, and who hold different values and beliefs. How can you convince people who hold values that are in conflict with yours to do anything? Find a higher value, a higher appeal, that will transcend your differences.
- 2 **To find a shared moral frame, you must be true to what you believe.** You should always be looking for moral frames that you share with your listeners—not ones that only they accept, but also ones from which you both work. Then you'll be both true to yourself and relevant to your audience.

The moral bases for public speaking therefore are not merely ethical or religious tenets, but they provide the foundation for human bonds. In a world as diverse and multicultural as ours, the search for workable moral frames will become one of your most important tasks as a public speaker. When you recognize the right

of others to speak, listen to them with genuine intent to understand, and respect their participation in our democracy, you are practicing public civility.

## WHY PUBLIC SPEAKING?

Ultimately, it comes down to the questions, why do I need to study public speaking? What will I learn and how can I use this in the future? Studying public speaking remains highly relevant and valuable in today's world for several reasons. Please consider these as you read the material in this book and reflect on what you can improve on as a speaker.

- **Communication Skills:** Public speaking helps individuals develop essential communication skills, including clarity, articulation, and effective message delivery. These skills are crucial in various personal and professional contexts, such as job interviews, meetings, and everyday conversations. We see this as the ultimate transferable skill. Those that can be reflective on the process of how they put together words, arguments, information, and a successful delivery are successful in employment.
- **Career Advancement:** Effective public speaking can significantly enhance career prospects. The ability to convey ideas persuasively and confidently can lead to better job opportunities, promotions, and increased influence within an organization. Practicing and improving this skill helps you stand out as a unique employee, citizen, member of a community, and much more.
- **Leadership Development:** Public speaking is a fundamental skill for leaders. Whether you're leading a team, a project, or an organization, the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide others through effective communication is essential for successful leadership. Leaders feel confident and in control of what they talk about and when. Public speaking skills are at the center of that ability.
- **Advocacy and Activism:** Public speaking is a powerful tool for advocating for causes and promoting social change. Activists, politicians, and community leaders rely on public speaking to raise awareness, mobilize support, and drive positive change. We are entering a time when advocating for important causes is crucial to the survival of programs, communities, and beliefs. Working through your communication skills will help you to be at the center of these conversations.
- **Personal Growth:** Overcoming the fear of public speaking can boost self-confidence and personal growth. It challenges you to confront your fears, improve self-esteem, and become more comfortable expressing yourself in front of others. Working through anxiety and apprehension is a normal part of the public speaking process. Accepting that it is a potential area for improvement is important. Accepting your abilities to practice those skills takes practice and time.

- **Influence and Persuasion:** Public speaking is a key vehicle for influencing and persuading others. Whether you're trying to convince an audience, persuade potential clients, or win over investors, the ability to make a compelling case is essential. Persuasion is a good thing. Being able to persuade ethically, effectively, and efficiently is a valuable skill to have.
- **Networking:** Public speaking engagements offer opportunities to connect with a diverse range of people and build valuable relationships. These connections can lead to collaborations, partnerships, and new opportunities. Don't allow your fear of public speaking or your indifference toward the skill to get in the way of the ability to accomplish these important things.
- **Problem Solving:** Public speaking often involves addressing complex issues and problem solving in real-time, which can improve your ability to think on your feet and respond to unexpected challenges.
- **Bridging Cultural and Language Barriers:** In an increasingly globalized world, effective public speaking can help bridge cultural and language barriers, allowing for more effective communication and collaboration across diverse audiences.
- **Civic Engagement:** Public speaking skills enable individuals to actively participate in civic life, whether by speaking at community meetings, participating in debates, or engaging in discussions about important societal issues.
- **Personal Branding:** Effective public speakers can develop a strong personal brand, which can be advantageous in various aspects of life, including building a positive reputation, attracting opportunities, and achieving personal goals.

There is an endless list of skills that public speaking opens the door to. Public speaking is valuable in your career, education, social life, and more. Public speaking remains a valuable skill in today's world, offering benefits for personal development, career advancement, leadership, and societal engagement.

Before we begin our journey through the book, I want to share with you five comments heard on countless occasions related to public speaking courses or workshops. I want to address why they should be thought of from a different angle as we begin this journey.



Transferable Skill. **“I won’t have to use public speaking in my job.”** This may be true. But there is no guarantee that you will not be asked at a crucial moment to provide a detailed presentation. This book is about finding the most fundamental tools to put in your tool belt when you are put on the spot. The critical tools used to create and analyze a speech transfer those skills to many other aspects. Think about your oral communication process. It transfers to much more than just a speech.

**“I’m not good at it. Someone else can do it for me.”** Fair. This is a skill, not a talent. You can work on your particular skill set and improve it. Find ways