

How to Present With Confidence: 7 Winning Tips

The Power Moves | 19 April, 2019 | by Lucio Buffalmano

Do you have a presentation, a speech, or a pitch coming up and you want to convey confidence, authority, and power?

You have come to the right place.

My name is Lucio and my expertise lies in social skills, emotional intelligence, and, of course, power dynamics.

By the end of this article, you will learn how to deliver the most powerful presentation anybody has ever seen.

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Why You Must Present Confidently

Have you ever heard of [Marshall McLuhan](#)?

As a student of communication, I have read about Marshall McLuhan so often that Marshall felt like my next-door neighbor.

But if you haven't heard about him, no worries.

Here all you need to know about McLuhan when it comes to present with confident:

| The medium is the message

"The medium is the message" means that who (or what) says something influences that message. That's so simple, yet so deep.

It means that **if you present confidently, powerfully, authoritatively, and convincingly, then your message will come across as powerful, authoritative, and convincing.**

If you present meekly and unconvincingly, then your message will come across as weak and unconvincing.

And we don't want that.

Especially if you got something important to say and to present.

This article then will now show you how to present with power and confidence.

#1. Walk Confidently On Stage

First impressions are crucial.

Every single [good book on social skills](#) or [body language](#) says that.Â

And they're right.

To walk confidently on stage, **you must feel like you have something important to say.**

You must believe in your message and look forward to delivering your message.

Yet, you don't want to rush on stage, because that communicates too much passion, and too much passion is juvenile and childish.

Just look at this example:

[Rushing to the stage says either that you're nervous, or that you're a bit too juvenile.](#)

[And junior employees and researchers rarely are the ones we listen to \(and yes, the black hole picture is an exception: don't make the rules with the exceptions\).](#)

At the end of the day, in business as in life, what truly delivers the goods is staying power (also read "[Grit by Angela Duckworth](#)").

And yes you want to communicate passion, but **you want to show passion tempered by expertise, authority, and staying power.**

And you communicate that by walking slowly and confidently on stage.

#2. Approach The Host With A Mix of Warmth & Power

Conveying power that attracts rather than repels is about striking that good balance between warmth and (too much) power.

Too much power would mean to treat the host like he's beneath you. And that would estrange the audience and make you come across like a smug, full-of-hot-air individual.

Avoid it.

On the other hand, you want to avoid behaving *too* warmly and friendly towards the host (or anyone else for that matter).

Because *too* friendly also communicates submissiveness.

One way that people end up behaving too warmly is by allowing the host to give them the upper hand.

Here is one (extreme) example:

It's important that you take care of not looking submissive towards the host or you (and by reflection your message) immediately look like less noteworthy before you even open your mouth.

Three mistakes I often see from people who communicate submissiveness in their approach to the host:

1. Stick their hand out too early
2. Stick their hand out too far
3. Smile too much and too broadly

You can read more here:

- [How submission look like](#)
- [How submission sounds](#)

And of course:

- [Mix warmth with power](#)

#3. Confident Handshake

A confident and powerful handshake is what sets you off for the races in style.

On the other hand, a weak handshake will subconsciously communicate that you're not an authority.

Unluckily, you will have to contend for this with the host and/or the person who gives you the stage.

[Allan Pease](#) says that 88% of corporate executives shake hands taking the upper hand.

When someone takes the upper hand on you they push you in the submissive, subservient position. And you don't want to start a presentation from the subservient position.

Typical techniques for aggressive hosts who give you an upper-hand handshake include:

- Meet the host from his right side so your hand will look like it's on top
- Use your other hand to cup his hand
- Use your other hand to clasp his arm or upper arm

For more techniques on how to cope with handshakes read:

- [Alpha male handshakes](#)

#4. Start With A Frontal Stance

Most people are afraid of public speaking.

Even the experienced public speaker can start off with a certain "queasiness" about standing in front of a lot (or even a few) people.

A natural, unconscious reaction, is often to close our body language. And most people know this and they know they should avoid crossing their arms or locking their feet.

What fewer people are aware of though are what I call "sideway body language".

Such as, they walk around the stage or they look back at the host as an unconscious excuse to avoid standing fully frontal to the audience.

Sideways body language makes you look unconfident and shifty. Sometimes it's a split of a second, like in this example:

[It's possible that he wasn't fearful. But because he adopted a sideways body language as soon as he walked in, people will unconsciously rate him as less confident, less authoritative and less trustworthy.](#)

To be on the safe side: start your speeches with a friendly but full frontal stance towards the audience.

#5. Don't Lavish Compliments (If You're A Junior Presenter)

Giving compliments is great, and it can confer power (also read [soft power](#)).

Compliments also win you friends and make you come across as warmer and more relatable.

However, the same rule as for friendly signals applies: too many compliments aggrandize others while

removing power and authority from yourself (also read: [submissive signs](#)).

The rule of thumb is this:

Â The more famous and established you are, the safer it is to give compliments.

The greener and less experienced you are, the more you need to avoid gushing about others.

Why so?

First of all, because you risk coming across as a sycophant. And sycophants usually add little value and rarely overtake their masters.

And second, because giving out too many compliments to the host or the previous speakers would send the message that *their* presentation is what people must pay attention to (and not yours).

And you don't want to send that message.

#6. Stay Vocally Neutral

You can't deliver a powerful presentation and go up at the end of each sentence.

You just can't. You either go up at the end of each sentence, or you deliver a powerful, confident presentation.Â

The two are mutually exclusive.

It is *that* important.

Just to be sure, by "going up at the end of each sentence" I am referring to that tendency of ending sentences as if there were a question mark.

Here is Stewie mimicking it in Family Guys:

Women sometimes use upward inflection as a [seductive tool](#) to send out "protect me" messages.

In those instances it's fine.

But you must avoid it if you want to present with power and confidence.

Also see:

- [Speaking Pro by Roger Love](#)

#7. Avoid PowerPoint

PowerPoint only has "power" in its name, but it's otherwise a tool that will remove from conveying power and confidence from your presentation.

There are 3 ways in which PowerPoint kills your confidence:

1. **Triangle of death** (teetering from full-frontal stance to the audience and giving the audience your back to look at the slide)
2. **You lose the audience** (when you force people to either read or listen to you, they can do only one.. And often it's neither of them)
3. **You lose the audience while switching medium** (when you go from the text on the slides back to speaking people need some time to re-adjust and if you don't give it to them, you lose them)

"Triangle of death" is a term I got from Nick Morgan, the author of [Power Cues](#).

When you stand in between the slides and the audience you murder your credibility, confidence, and power.Â

What's the solution then?Â

These are the solutions:

1. Don't use PowerPoint
2. Only use pictures
3. If you must use text, give people the time to read and don't talk as they read
4. If you must comment on the slides, either learn them and don't look at them or move outside the stage and use a pointer to adopt a "voice over" type of presentation

SUMMARY

This article is an extract from a seminar I have delivered at the Technical University of Berlin.

The central idea is that if you want people to listen and believe in your message, then *you* must make yourself a trustworthy and confident conduit for that message.

This article gave you a few advanced pointers on how to deliver a powerful presentation and how to come across as a confident speaker who speaks with authority.

Also read:

- [Speaking Pro](#)Â by Roger Love (review)

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