



**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL

## USING **BODY LANGUAGE**



The Better  
Speaker Series



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**



# USING BODY LANGUAGE

The Better Speaker Series

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# THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Better Speaker Series* is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

"Using Body Language" offers information on using facial expressions, gestures, and whole body movement to enhance a presentation. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

### ***In Your Own Words***

*The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.*

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
- ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in the online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.

## **BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of becoming a Distinguished club—or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

# USING BODY LANGUAGE

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Using Body Language” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

# USING BODY LANGUAGE

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION

The body can be an effective tool for adding emphasis and clarity to a speaker's words. It can also be a powerful instrument for convincing an audience of a speaker's sincerity, passion, and commitment.

Audiences base their judgment of a speaker and the speaker's message on what they see as well as upon what they hear. A speaker's stance, facial expressions, hand gestures, effectively the movement of the entire body, communicate more to an audience than actual spoken words.

Body language can also help release nervous energy. Displays of discomfort through nervous habits distract the audience. Speakers can harness this nervous energy and use it to contribute to their message instead.

Movement attracts and keeps an audience's attention. A stationary speaker is more likely to lose the audience's interest.

There are three general categories of body language:

- ▶ Facial expressions
- ▶ Gestures
- ▶ Whole body movement

### FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Facial expression is often the key to the meaning behind a message. A speaker's face communicates more clearly than any other part of the body. An audience will watch a speaker's face for clues about the speaker's sincerity, attitude toward the message, and conviction.

Match facial expressions to spoken words. If a speaker talks about a tragedy but his or her face carries an expression of joy, the audience will be confused.

Eye contact is important. In some cultures, avoiding eye contact is considered dishonest, insincere, or disinterested while in others it is an expression of politeness and respect. Whatever the locale, try to make everyone in the audience feel as if you are communicating in a personal manner. This projects an air of confidence and sincerity.

### GESTURES

Gestures reinforce verbal messages or convey a specific thought or emotion. Gestures can be made by any part of the body but most are made with the hands and arms. Avoid nervous mannerisms, such as fidgeting with jewelry, as they tend to distract and annoy an audience. Conversely, strong, purposeful, and complementary gestures strengthen your message and add interest to your presentation.

V1

V2

V3



V 4

### Three Types of Gestures

- ▶ **Conventional gestures** are symbols for words, such as the raised hand for the word “stop” and two raised fingers for the number two.
- ▶ **Descriptive gestures** describe the idea you are communicating, such as holding the hands apart to show length or moving the hands and arms to indicate shape.
- ▶ **Emotional gestures** suggest feelings, such as shaking a clenched fist to show anger or determination or shrugging the shoulders to show indifference.

Gestures must be a natural outgrowth of the speaker’s thoughts and feelings about their topic. Poorly planned gestures look stiff and artificial and detract from the speaker’s message.

The frequency and vigor of gestures must be appropriate for the words. Match gestures to the audience size. Use smaller, conversational gestures for small audiences and large, exaggerated gestures for larger ones.

V 5

### WHOLE BODY MOVEMENT

A speaker’s stance, posture, and movement tell the audience whether the speaker is confident, alert, and in command of the situation.

A relaxed, balanced speaking stance provides a solid starting point from which to gesture or move in any direction; this decreases nervousness and helps the speaker feel poised and comfortable. Varying positions during the presentation can help the speaker provide visual transitions from one point of the speech to the next and can help keep the audience focused.

V 6

### PRACTICE

Practice using facial expressions, gestures, and whole body movement effectively. Using a mirror or video recording can be useful.

#### **Presenter:**

*If you wish, you may devise a short exercise allowing your audience to practice different gestures.*

### CONCLUSION

Visual presentation is a major part of a speech’s success. Communicating ideas visually through gestures and other body expressions enhances not just a presentation but also the speaker’s overall effectiveness.

V 7

*“The language of the body is the key that can unlock the soul.”*  
– Konstantin Stanislavsky, developed the method theory of acting

# Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



## Notes



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