

MONTHLYMEET

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10 top tips for better teen talks - How to nail it!

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1: Know what makes a 'good talk'.

A good talk is not just 'what you like' because you agree with what was said or it taught you specifically. A good talk is good because it speaks to a variety of people. It engages with and interacts with multiple learning styles (read more about that [here](#)). A good talk takes people on a journey and creates a pathway for them to follow (we'll talk more about that in point 7).

2 - Nail the first 30-60 seconds.

If you haven't caught their interest in the first 30 -60

seconds you won't hold it for the rest of the talk. This time is critical to your talk going well. Ditch the introduction; don't introduce yourself; that should be the role of the person leading the meeting you are speaking at. Make eye contact with your audience. Helps build a rapport with the audience. Let silence sit (count to 5) and give people time to focus on you (it also gives you time to settle yourself). Don't apologise; be confident with yourself and what you are about to deliver (make sure you are more than adequately prepared and don't have to fumble with notes, microphones etc). Set the hook; grab their attention with a

joke, a quote, a fact, a one-liner or a controversial comment; all of which should be aimed at getting people to engage with what you are about to say.

3 - Work with stage fright, not against it.

Stage fright doesn't need to be your enemy; learn how to manage it and use it to your advantage. Keep an open body posture; it's hard to suffer from panic and anxiety if you keep your body's posture open and confident (despite how you may be feeling). Spend time talking with God about the talk before you step up to speak, this will

help calm you down and give you a better perspective on your talk. Avoid caffeine beforehand. Exercise a couple of hours before (helps release endorphins that release stress & anxiety). Laugh lots; again helps with endorphin release, increased blood flow & a serotonin boost. It also helps to stretch your facial muscles. Get to the venue early to give you the time to familiarise yourself with the staging, lighting, P.A. system etc. Make sure you are well prepared and nothing will surprise you. Also it is good to talk to members of your audience beforehand to help ease your nerves.

4 - Know where to apply 'theatre'.

When you talk, you are not playing a character, but are presenting the best version of yourself. Don't try to be someone else; be the best you that you can be. Your rough edges are good - helps convey a sense of humanity and makes you more real to your audience. Not there to be a polished slick salesman; young people want honesty, transparency and the genuine article. Good projection of your voice and clear diction are still important.

5 - Understand your instrument.

For a guitarist to perform well they need to practice with their instrument; the same goes for your voice. Understand the different parts of your body that work together to produce the sounds for speech that come out of your mouth. The vocal folds or [vocal chords](#) are important; as are the different resonating parts of your body; such as your nasal

cavity, the soft palate, in-fact your [whole body](#).

6 - Develop technical skills - and know when to use them.

Your voice is your instrument; know how to use it well. Understand the register of your voice and how to [use that well](#). Other aspects of your voice that come into play are the timbre (the tone quality of your voice; how the vocal chords vibrate as you speak - good video [here](#) on that), the pitch (the rate of vibration of the vocal folds), the volume (loudness) & the pace (the speed at which you speak). Get to know your voice and how to use it to the best of its ability. Become a skilled technical user of your own voice.

7 - Create structure/tell the story.

You need to take people on a journey. Each talk must have a beginning, middle & end. Make sure that the links and transitions between the different parts of your talk are clear and not disconnected. Involve the 5 senses in your talk; engage people's sight, hearing, taste, touch & smell with what you say. Believe in what you are saying; people will not listen if you are not passionate and engaged in what you are saying. End when you say you are going to end; don't drag the talk on or run over-time.

8 - Clarify the message.

If your message cannot be encapsulated into a short 30 second one-liner; then you need to rethink it. Keep it simple. It is better to have one point to make and say it three different ways that to say three points one way.

Your talk needs to be so clear that anyone between the age of 7 to 70 can understand it.

9 - Actually call people to action.

Your talk should inspire your listeners and spur them on to act upon the message you have delivered. It should be creational and inspirational. Know what your call to action is and repeatedly call it out or thread it through your talk. Let your listeners somewhat interpret it; don't just give them robotic steps to follow from your talk, but let it be a more organic actionable response.

10 - Enjoy it.

It seems too simple, but if you are enjoying your talk, your listeners will too. Ignore any mistakes that you make and move on, most of your listeners will not even realise that they have been made. Bring the life out of your talk and fill it with vibrancy. Ensure you build & maintain good eye contact throughout your talk. Smile. Play the audience; use body language & vocal technique to draw them into your talk; like going on a fairground ride. Help them enjoy it too.