

Public Speaking Workshop - Part 2

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Friday, September 2, 2011

Jonathan Fielding, Amphibian Stage Productions

Human Body

- Make yourself available and open.
- Smile...A LOT
- Maintain eye contact. Don't talk to the floor.
- Don't cross your arms; this indicates a closed-off position that makes you seem less approachable. If this is your bad habit, try holding your hands behind your back. Don't put your hands in your pocket.
- Don't yawn.
- Don't slouch.
- Stand firmly planted. Don't bounce around.
- Don't point with your fingers or directly at individuals. To indicate through gesture, keep your hand open with the palm up like how a weatherman points at a map.
- Make gestures count. Otherwise, they may signal nervous energy and distract from the content of your talk. If this is your bad habit, try holding your hands behind your back until it is time for a meaningful gesture.
- Think of your voice as coming from your whole body, not just your throat. Talk to the back of the group to ensure that everyone can hear you.
- Pay attention to your voice inflection. If you want people to answer a question, you must inflect your voice to indicate this.
- Texans often prefer more personal space than New Yorkers. Read your audience and adjust to their comfort level.
- Think of yourself as the host of the museum. Be pleasant and accommodating to your guests.

Nervous Energy

- Preparation - The number one reason for being nervous is lack of preparation. Thoroughly research your work and go over it, days before your engagement. Practice it again and again until you've removed all of the "uhs", "likes" and other filler words. Do it again in front of the mirror. Do it for a trusted friend or relative. Do it for *another* trusted friend or relative.
 - Practice saying the words out loud, not just in your mind.
 - Have the trusted friend point out those unconscious habits you don't know you have.
- Avoid stimulants - Make sure you don't overdo it on coffee, tea or soda before your engagement.
- Stretching - Locate where you hold tension in your body. Become familiar with stretches that will help relieve that tension and perform them the day of your speaking engagement as well as moments before you speak. However, do not stretch in front of your audience.

- Attire - Wear clothes that make you feel good about yourself.
 - You want to wear clothes that make you feel confident and outgoing, not clothes that make you too relaxed.
- Breathing - Pay attention to your breathing. Make sure your breathing is regular and deep. Avoid shallow and quick breathing. If this is a problem for you, consider yoga.
 - If your breathing gets shallow, take a deep breath at the end of sentences.
- Music/Mantra - Listen to music. Find your power song or catch phrase and live it.
- Dry mouth - Drink plenty of water. Make sure you aren't dehydrated. If your mouth keeps getting dry, lightly bite your tongue.
- Remember that they want you to succeed. The people who come to the museum are excited, eager and ready to be inspired. Your job is to fulfill that desire.
 - You get to be like Santa, giving your groups their wish to learn more about art.

Children/Teenagers

- You rule young children. You are older and wiser. If they get out of control, don't be shy about saying in a firm voice, "Enough. Pay attention." If you have high standards, children will often meet your expectations.
- Keep kids engaged. Ask them lots of questions and turn the looking experience into a game with questions that will inspire them to look closely and interpret what they see.
- Have antsy kids sit down on the floor.
- For problem kids, use their names to get their attention.
- For mute teenagers, remember it's their loss if they don't become engaged. Forgive them because it most likely has nothing to do with you. It's also entirely possible that they are paying attention and just are not speaking up. You don't have time in an hour-long tour to fix their social anxiety - just let them be.