

Inspire Others with your 'Voice of Leadership'

Would you like people to stop, take notice, and really listen to what you have to say?

Would you like to inspire and motivate others with your projects, goals, or vision?

Would you like more confidence and clarity in expressing your 'voice of leadership' to really connect with people when you stand up to speak?

Would you like that special x factor?

If you're like most people, you are glossophobic (afraid of public speaking).

Let's look at exactly what makes you afraid when you get ready to speak in public.

Dr. Roger Flax, an executive consultant in the United States, surveyed 12,000 senior executives and asked them what their reasons were for being afraid of public speaking. His results were published in 'American Salesman' magazine in 1990 : here were the top answers:

63% were afraid of being boring

71% were afraid of freezing up and forgetting

77% were afraid of ruining their career or reputation

81% were afraid of making an embarrassing mistake

Can you relate with these fears?

Dr. Stephen R. Covey cites in his book 'The 8th Habit' , a survey called 'The Harris Poll' of 23,000 employees - it found that only:

15% felt they worked in a high trust environment and only

17% felt they had open communication in their organisation.

This means that there is not much trust or connection happening out there.

So what keeps you from being fully confident and connected?

One of the basic emotions which gets in your way is:

SHAME:

Did anyone ever say to you, 'pull your head in'? Have you ever been publicly humiliated? Were you ever told you shouldn't be a 'tall poppy' or a 'braggart', a 'skite', or a 'show-off' ? Did you ever feel you just weren't good enough or didn't belong?

We learned to pull our head in and to not risk looking the fool - to tone ourselves down a bit to keep ourselves safer...yet safer also means less inspiring.

Are you interested in inspiring others when you speak?

Then, perhaps you might need to challenge any feelings of or 'I'm not ready' or 'I'm not good enough'.

There are some very basic things people can do to counteract the fears.

The first one is to breathe deeply. Breathing helps lower our stress hormone levels of adrenaline and cortisol and literally calms us down to be more resourceful and present. By breathing fully and consciously at least ten minutes before speaking, as well as while you're speaking the focus on what you are saying will be clearer.

Secondly to help with nervousness it is important to maintain an awareness of what the audience needs to feel and to hear. Once you feel their connectedness the better you will feel and your self-consciousness will begin to melt away. Asking lots of questions to reach out and connect with them will help.

Thirdly, become aware of your five senses. If your head is spinning, and you're having trouble focusing on the task at hand, simply stop and notice what you hear e.g. traffic outside, a bird singing, a motor humming. What can you see - the colour of the carpet, the number and shape of the windows, the lights, the people in the room? What can you smell? Is the room musty or fresh-smelling? Can you smell someone's perfume? What can you feel? Can you feel your feet on the ground, the temperature of the air? And finally taste. Have you recently had something to eat? Can you taste a mint or perhaps garlic?

By experimenting and practicing these techniques you will find your fears diminish and this leads to an increased confidence to make your voice heard.

So are you holding yourself back, not fully allowing your voice to be heard?

In my work with business leaders and in my 'Voice of Leadership' workshop, I teach 'Seven Steps to Powerful Presence' and 'Seven Steps to Crafting a Presentation' which all support leaders in strengthening their confidence, connection, and effectiveness while speaking.

Do you still feel you're 'not good enough' to be a speaker?

A few months ago, I was asked to become the NEW President of the National Speakers' Association of New Zealand in Auckland. I had a little voice come up and say 'I'd love to!'...which was drowned out immediately by another bigger voice saying 'you're not ready...maybe next year' I held my tongue and didn't say a word. I thought, 'I'm not ready...I have to wait til I'm more experienced...a better

speaker...a better leader'. Another voice in me said, 'Take the plunge, go for it!' I ended up accepting the challenge and becoming the current President of the National Speakers' Association of New Zealand's Auckland chapter, and it's been a tremendous experience...I've been encouraged to step up and to find and express my own 'voice of leadership'.

So, DON'T wait til you feel good enough - you might never get started. ..the time is NOW - not later...remember to consider the reality of your time limit here on earth.

Here's to you strengthening your confidence and connection and moving your communication up the scale from ordinary to inspiring...taming your fears and discovering your 'voice of leadership'.

Sally teaches short courses at the Centre for Continuing Education at The University of Auckland as well as public workshops. The next presentation skill workshop is being held in Auckland on 6th July. For more information see sallymabelle.com/events or call 09 525 4008. To see Sally in action see www.sallymabelle.com/speaker. Sally's background as a professional actress and voice coach as well as her light-hearted approach make her workshops uniquely fun and engaging educational experiences.