

“Succinct and well researched – Alex Joll shows how to communicate effectively in just 7 days” – Online Business Book Review

Master Public Speaking in 7 Days

The Phenomenal 7 Day Program Designed to
Teach Anyone How to Speak with Confidence and Have Influence

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For more information on public speaking and influence visit <http://www.AlexJoll.com>

**Alex can be seen at many events throughout the year both in Europe and the Middle East
Check the website for dates and locations**

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Master Public Speaking in 7 Days

Foreword by Andrew Capon

If asked, few people would confidently declare that they are good at public speaking. Most would dismiss the question as irrelevant. On the rare occasions we think about speaking in public, our mind's eye conjures up a lectern and an expectant audience of dozens, or a room full of overly exuberant wedding guests.

Perhaps this is the one of the last unconscious legacies of classical education. We are taught about rhetoric, the art of discourse. The Greek philosopher Plato described the goal of rhetoric as, "the persuasion of the ignorant in courts and assemblies." This had a particular resonance for our Victorian forebears in the grand public schools who were destined for careers as administrators in Britain's far flung empire.

The schoolboys of a former age could define assonance and use rhetorical devices on speech days and in their debating societies. John F Kennedy's speech writer Theodore Sorenson would doubtless have known that, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country", was an example of antimetabole.

For most of us, however, it is a memorable phrase, recalled as much for its delivery as its eloquence and imbued with a particular poignancy in the light of subsequent events. This is a point persuasively made in this guide. Words do matter, but they matter less than you or polished rhetoricians might imagine.

Very few of us will stand in front of a crowd of tens of thousands at the US Capitol with many millions watching at home. But most of us in our jobs will be asked to present a point of view to clients, our bosses, or peers. The size of the audience is immaterial. Our goal is the same as Plato's Athenian Assemblymen: to persuade.

Any amount of fancy rhetoric will only get you so far. How you walk into that meeting, how you stand and confident and controlled speech are far more important. These are lessons you learn as a journalist early on. If you shuffle into a meeting room and sit five seats away from your interview subject, while he or she sits at the head of the table, you have already ceded control of that space.

You have also sent multiple messages, all unconscious: I don't feel comfortable; I am meek and overawed; I will listen attentively because you are more powerful. Then the interview starts. If your interlocutor has a command of his subject he will assert this control further. There are still times, now thankfully rare, that I will walk out of an interview thinking it went well. Only when the tape is played back does it become clear that the interviewee has said very little, but delivered it in a convincing and persuasive way.

Finance ministers, CEOs and successful hedge fund managers, like to be in control and will seize the opportunity to assume it. For some, this is innate. Their success has come because they are natural leaders. But for every "natural" there are just as many who have been expensively taught by personal coaches, PR men and "resting" actors. But us mere mortals need not despair. There is no magic fairy dust that is sprinkled over masters of the universe at birth.

This book offers a practical approach to unleashing your inner leader. Alex Joll is an expert guide. There are few people who can live up to Rudyard Kipling's exemplar of filling "the unforgiving minute/ With sixty seconds' worth of distance run". But whether in the kitchen, on the lecture circuit, behind a desk or (once in a while) down the pub, Alex does.

Andrew Capon, award winning financial journalist, investment strategist, writer, editor publisher and racing tipster.

Introduction

The aim of this book is to teach anyone to deliver a great speech after just 7 days of training and practice.

What is a great speech? First you need to decide what you want to achieve. If you are delivering to a prospect, trying to get a sale, or convert people to your Point of View (POV) then this is your objective.

If you are speaking to convert people to your way of thinking (POV) – support a charitable organisation for example – that is a similar goal.

You may be the Best Man at a wedding and want to give a good speech – that would most likely include stories and humour, which are tricky to get right. You need to engage the audience and have them go along with you – adopt your POV.

Whatever your reason for speaking in public you can have maximum impact and effect in just 7 days with this course. Master Public Speaking in 7 Days is designed to help you influence your audience. It will also build your confidence and enable you to turn any nervousness you have into positive energy to enhance your performance.

Public Speaking is not just speaking to large groups. I include any audience in public, from 1 to a multitude. The same rules apply if you want to be effective and get your POV across.

In this 7 day course we will look at all the subtle aspects of speaking. For example: 67% of your message is non verbal – that is nothing to do with what you say. It all has to do with your body language and performance. You need to be consistent across the 67% of non verbal communication as well as the other 33% of verbal – only about 5% to 10% of which is the actual content of the speech.

I remember a comedian from the 70s always saying “It’s the way I tell ‘em” – and delivery is most of the success of humour. A great current example is the British comedian Michael Macintyre. He moves swiftly across the stage, smiles and laughs as he tells stories and shakes his head in such a way that his hair moves in a distinct fashion (have a look at him on YouTube if you get the chance). What he says is not particularly funny most of the time. But he delivers it in such a way as to have audiences in stitches, and he sells millions of DVDs. In short; he is engaging.

Some people seem to be naturally adept at speaking to groups, they have charisma. People often look at them and say “I could never do that” – but you can, we all can and through this course you will learn how.

Take Bill Clinton, ex-president of the USA. He is a great communicator. He has style and lots of likeability. But this was not all natural; he had to learn a lot of these skills and practice, just look at some of his early speeches for real proof (his 1988 party conference speech is a rambling mess and he is cheered when he finally says he is coming to the end). When it comes to speaking in public, practice makes natural. In other words, the more you do this, the more you will relax and feel comfortable in presenting to audiences.

Then the more relaxed and confident you are, the more effect you will have. Most of the things you will learn come naturally and just need some attention paid to them. Some are a little harder and may take more practice.

Each day we will look at a few key aspects of public speaking. There are exercises to do, which can be fitted in at odd spare moments in your day. If you commute to work or drive for work, this is a great time to practise.

By day 5 it will all be coming together and you will see how easy it is to master these techniques. By day 6 we will look more at your audience, and ways to practise to help progress even quicker.

Then on day 7 we will look at modelling, which is a great way to gain confidence and help give a great performance.

By the end of the week you will have the confidence and power to speak and influence your audience. Then each time you have an important talk to give you can review all the days and give a great persuasive speech each and every time.

Speak with confidence, speak to influence, speak and win your audience with Master Public Speaking in 7 Days.

Note: This book is very hands on, so you will need to do the exercises and build your speech as you go along. You will need pen and paper, and most importantly, a large quantity of Post It notes.

Day 1 – Sunday

You may already have an idea of what you will talk about. If you do then make notes and as things occur to you during the first days of this course write them down. Stories are important, as we will discuss on Wednesday (Day 4) so make a note of any that come to mind.

Don't pay much attention to them now though as we have to look at other more important things before we turn our attention to content.

The first couple of days may seem a little abstract at first but as I mentioned, 67% of your communication is non verbal so we will look at getting that right first.

The Gate Keeper

Our evolution has been long and fraught. Species have come and gone and we are developed from many. Our brains have evolved as well, but we still have many instincts that we developed for survival in the wild.

One such example is the "Fight or Flight" reaction to a situation. Just like more primitive animals we evaluate situations and continually ask "is it safe?" this kind of evaluation is happening in what some people call the reptilian or "Old Brain" the evolutionary one that served us so well for thousands of years.

The problem is that when we put ourselves in front of an audience our old brain senses danger. All these eyes looking at us, we have exposed ourselves and are in the open – hence the judgement that we are in danger.

Our old brain wants us to fight or flee, or possibly stand very still and not get noticed. This is the complete opposite of what our new reasoning brain wants. It is a rational more developed brain the "New Brain". It's the one that got us up here in the first place and it knows that we are in no danger.

So we have to overcome our old brain with the rational thinking of the new brain. Sometimes this is easier said than done. But over the following days you will learn to turn this nervousness into positive energy and overcome the old brain.

The old brain is very important in our audience too. As each member of our audience looks at us their old brains are also asking “is it safe?” They are looking at us and judging our performance to decide if they should trust us. If their old brain decides it does not like the look of us, it will not let our message in. This is the gate keeper at work.

To get passed the gate keeper we need to appear confident and have a consistent message across all our forms of communication. This is particularly important for the 67% of non verbal communication mentioned earlier.

If the 67% is wrong or inconsistent our audience will not even hear our message. The gate keeper will decide not to trust what we say so our words will not be taken in by the new brain – which is our real target audience.

The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. We must be believed to be heard. If we do not, we can fail before we even open our mouths.

Be a New Communicator

New communicators are people like Steve Jobs, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Oprah Winfrey: quite a mixed bunch. To be honest I am not sure if I am comfortable with Tony Blair because I always found him a little too smarmy and false. However, he was very successful at making a connection and influencing his audience. In looking at him we can see some of the techniques discussed here a little more obviously than with the others. I think this is because he seems to be trying so hard to implement them and be natural, that he comes across as a little false.

Looking at the others we can see a truer natural approach that seems genuine and lets the audience engage with the speaker. Think of Jobs at Mac World and the way he stood up on stage, with no notes, and spoke from the heart. The audience loved it, and consequentially loved what he was selling.

The worst communicators are those who read from a speech. If you want to do that just stand up and hand out a written copy to everyone. They can read it and get all the facts – they can even take it home and refer to it later.

That is not what speaking is about. Speak to influence; speak with passion, authority and confidence. If you know what you are talking about, and you should before you stand up, then you can influence people to your POV.

By all means, if the information you have is technical, give a handout at the END (never during or the audience will start reading that and not be listening to you).

New communicators are not really that new. It is just that so many people from the last century read speeches, that we became accustomed to the “old” style of speaking. It is so dry and passionless that audiences just tune out; especially in the modern age. You have to compete with short attention spans and multi media. If you lose your audience’s attention they will be on their smart phones Tweeting and catching up on emails before you get a chance to have any influence.

Later we will return to some examples of new communicators but for now let’s get started on your next performance and getting you past the gate keepers of your audience...

Dress and Appearance

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. After the last section I am sure you can see how that is true. In short you have 2 seconds: someone introduces you – you walk on stage or stand up, lift your head and prepare to speak...

The whole audience has already made up their mind about you. What do you want them to have decided?

This judging is done by the old or first brain. As we discussed it is continually assessing the situations we are in; it asks is it safe – can I trust this person? People look at you and subconsciously their old brain is deciding whether or not to listen to and believe what you say.

In his book “Blink”, Malcolm Gladwell looks in detail at rapid cognition. *“It’s a book about rapid cognition, about the kind of thinking that happens in a blink of an eye. When you meet someone for the first time, or walk into a house you are thinking of buying, or read the first few sentences of a book, your mind takes about two seconds to jump to a series of conclusions. Well, “Blink” is a book about those two seconds, because I think those instant conclusions that we reach are really powerful and really important and, occasionally, really good.”*

Gladwell cites a study done at Harvard University that showed how it takes about 2 seconds to make that judgement. Students were asked to evaluate a teacher’s performance. Different groups were shown video of teachers and asked to evaluate their performance: First from 10 seconds of silent video footage, then from 5 and finally 2 seconds of silent video. The students in the class were also asked to assess their teacher over the term.

The results were consistent across all the groups. That shows that not only do we make snap 2 second judgments about people, but that we are very good at it. This skill has evolved over thousands of years to be almost a completely subconscious process.

Dress and appearance is essential in that first 2 seconds. Look shabby and people will assume you are shabby, and your message equally so. Look professional and smart and people will assume that you are an authority.

There is a modern view in sales that you should dress to suit your prospect. In this case your audience. So if they wear jeans so should you – WRONG. You need to dress according to your message. If you are a professional, dress as one. If you are in sales, dress smart.

Personally I would recommend dressing better than or at least equally as smart as your audience. Remember that you need to be seen as an authority on your subject. If your hair is greasy and unkempt you will lose authority. If your shirt is unbuttoned or dirty you will have less influence. There are many small details that go to make up an appearance. Get them all right and have more power. Get a few wrong and you give an inconsistent message and undermine what you are actually saying. You will lack influence.

These are simple points that make a huge difference. Look as good as you possibly can. If you lose the first 2 seconds you will have to work for 4 minutes to get the audience to change their mind about you.

Posture and Movement

Stand up straight and tall. Do not slouch or lean. Keep your chin up and act confident. Acting is a good analogy – if you are not confident naturally, then just imagine that you are acting a role as a confident person. We will look more at this on Saturday (Day 7).

There is a subtle difference between someone who stands up straight and tall, and someone who allows themselves to slouch. Try standing up now – fill your lungs with air and breathe deeply from the diaphragm.

See how that makes you an inch taller? That inch means more power and authority. It means more believability.

Now try standing up, back up to a flat wall. Put your heels flush to it, and then press your shoulders back to the wall with your chin up. Now walk forwards and feel how just that slight adjustment, especially with your shoulders, has changed your posture.

A strong posture can add to your confidence level and enhance your performance. Practise this whenever you can this week.

Now you also need to practise movement. This is very much dependent on where you will stand for your speech. You may even be sitting if you are in a boardroom type situation. If you are a Best Man, the chances are that you will be behind a table and restricted in movement. In these cases you should practice this week's entire course in the situation you will be in on the day. It makes a big difference to be seated so practice for the next performance specifically.

If you do have a stage or open space to stand in, then take charge of it. This is your territory and you must own it. Do not hide behind a lectern. Step out and engage with your audience.

Take strides and move with confidence. You can practise this every day. Do not take one step and stop. This looks nervous and lacks confidence. Take one step and then follow it with another one or two.

Move about a stage and engage with the audience on one side. Then turn and move back to the other. Do not over do this movement but do use it to engage the different sections of your audience. Positive movement shows confidence. Moving about gets the audience involved in following you around the stage.

If you are to be seated then practice leaning back and taking up a lot of space. Don't lean far back or slouch. Instead sit confidently upright in the back of the chair. From here you can survey the whole room and engage people individually in the eye on their level or higher. Shoulders up and back and let your posture occupy plenty of space around you. This shows confidence. Give it a go now.

The tendency is often to lean in. You can do this occasionally to emphasise a point, but in the main avoid it as it will diminish your power. Think about how powerful people like Donald Trump sit at a meeting. They take up lots of space and command the room. Try doing this and get used to being the centre of power in a room.

Practice makes natural – exercises:

1. Posture – try walking away from a wall a few times and see if you can replicate the effect without the wall.
2. Breathe deeply from the diaphragm and make yourself bigger as you do the above.
3. If you are to move around a stage practise moving in an affirmative way; try striding and do so with confidence.
4. Think about your dress and appearance. What will you wear? Plan now and make sure it does not need to go to the cleaners – if so you still have time. Get a haircut or book an appointment for the day before or morning of the speech (A new hairdo can add loads of confidence).
5. As you watch TV this week see how people look. Do the news readers look smart and authoritative? Are they believable? What do they do that makes you inclined to believe them?

Day 2 – Monday

Gestures

What to do with your hands? One of the ways people undermine their message is through nervousness expressed through hand gestures. The worst offence is the fig leaf position as adopted by soccer players when facing a free kick. They have their arms in front and cover their private parts with their hands.

Slightly worse is when people adopt this pose and then open their hands, turning palms outwards – what is known as the fig leaf flasher. This is a very defensive body posture and gives the impression that you are nervous and do not trust the listener. It also looks really weird when people flash their crotch at you.

Similarly, folded arms are a defensive posture and negative body language. If you are sat, crossed legs can mean the same. It all depends if someone is inside or outside of your area of inclusion. Imagine being sat at the end of a sofa with your family to your left. Typically you would cross your right leg over your left. This way you block out people to the right and include your family to the left. If you are sat on a chair and cross your legs, the people on the outside are excluded. This is a really subtle message and mostly only noticed by the subconscious old brain, however it is something to be aware of as you can alienate part of your audience without them even realising it consciously.

It is best to relax and try to remind yourself that you are not in danger. Your audience is here to listen to you, and despite all the eyes looking at you, you are safe. A non defensive posture and gestures are always preferable.

Arms by your sides coming up to make gestures to accentuate points as needed. Do not wring your hands together. Do not interlock your fingers either. Again, very negative posture, bordering on offensive. Showing your audience your knuckles is not a way to win them over.

Avoid pointing. Bill Clinton used to point at his listener to emphasise his speech. His advisors trained him not to, and instead taught him the thumbs up gesture to underscore his points in a non threatening way.

After Clinton, George W. Bush adopted this thumbs up as well. Personally I like an open palm, sometimes two at a time. When we see films of Jesus preaching, the actor often takes this open palm gesture, I think that there are even famous paintings of him in this non threatening posture. If it's good enough for Jesus then I am fine with it.

Let these gestures come naturally when out on a stage. Use them in conjunction with moving around. Later in the week as you start to practise your speech you can see where they can be inserted to maximum effect. Underline your points with a gesture and add emphasis to your words.

We all tend to have a nervous gesture or habit. Find out what yours is and work to eliminate it. When you get into a nervous state look to see what it is, perhaps ask your colleagues or friends if they have noticed anything.

Facial Expression

Smile. Not a silly smile grinning from ear to ear – unless you just told a funny story. But engage the audience with a relaxed and open smile. It is possible to be serious and authoritative when smiling; but grinning is going too far.

Try a smile on now. It changes your mood and it will change the way you speak. This is something that comes from NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming). We will look at this more later in the week. For now just feel the difference in your mood as you change your expression from neutral to a smile.

Your mouth smiles, so do your eyes and all your facial features join in the fun. To find out how much this affects what you say, just try listening to someone on the phone. Can you tell if they are smiling? Sometimes you really can, and it affects the way that they sound.

Tomorrow we will look at this in more detail with vocal inflection. However, a smile is what you need at the beginning and end of a presentation, if not all the way through it.

I remember in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (one of my favourite books), Dale Carnegie describes how we all have basically one of 3 types of face: a naturally smiling one, a neutral one, or a naturally frowning one. If you are the latter you have to work twice as hard to look like you are smiling. Dale recounts the story of a man who thought that he was smiling but all those around him thought that he looked permanently miserable.

It may be an idea to look in the mirror – and get a second opinion. In most cases we can all benefit from broadening any smile we do use, and let our enthusiasm for our subject come out through it.

There are some facial exercises that you can do before presenting if you feel that your face is a little fixed in one expression. They help relax the muscles and expressions will come more naturally; as will your speech.

First there is the prune. Purse your lips and push them forwards, meanwhile scrunching up your face as much as possible. Then once you are totally prune faced, open your mouth wide, whilst opening your eyes wide too. Stretch it all out as if you are really surprised.

Next you can do some smiling; simple but effective. Try some really big exaggerated smiles. Really stretch your lips out.

Then try the “brush” exercise. Say brush, and whilst doing so push your lips forwards accentuating the r sound and rolling them out as you do so. You can do the motorboat too; just put your lips loosely together and push air through to make a motor sort of sound.

These can be great to do just before a presentation. They relax your face, and get you ready to speak easily and express your words and emotions.

Always go out, or stand up, smiling; remember you have 2 seconds to make that first impression. We learn from the earliest of ages to trust people with smiles. As babies we see a smiling face as a friendly face. This stays with us and we trust smiling faces and people.

Proverbs 18, vs24: “He who would have friends, let him show himself friendly” – smile and the world smiles with you. If they smile with you, they may listen to what you have to say. If they listen you can have influence.

Eye Communication

Look me in the eye when I am talking to you! People who look down, to the side, or up and away, are often lying. If you do this when speaking to people, you will appear to be lying.

Look people in the eye. If you are 1 to 1 this is easy to do. Look someone in the eye, hold it for a few seconds then look away at something else. Keep looking back at them and in this way you will engage them and seem sincere.

It is even easier with a few people to look at. Then you can give everyone a few seconds of eye contact at a time. Be sure to give everyone an even amount. Sometimes it is easy, when presenting to a meeting or board of directors, to get too focused on the leader. This can alienate others in the group.

Occasionally one of the people on the periphery may be an important part of the decision process and you may not even know it. If they feel left out they will not have such a positive impression of what you have said. Then when the leader asks their opinion they may vote against you. So be sure to involve everyone equally.

In a big room with an audience of 10 to 50 be sure to get to everyone at least once; time willing. This is a great reason to move around on a stage. You can move across and connect with a person on the right. Then come back to the centre and connect with someone at the back. Then move to the left and so on.

If you get over 50 you probably can't get eye contact with them all, so go for as many as you can and project your glance to all areas throughout the speech. Particularly try to involve the people at the back.

When practising your speech you can create an imaginary audience with post it notes. Put a pair of eyes on post it notes and then spread them around in front of you as an audience may be seated. Then practice moving your glance around to engage them all individually or by area. It may sound a bit daft, but when practising your delivery it can really help to imagine your audience.

One thing that people do not realise is that eye contact can give you power and dominance. The power comes from engaging people's eye contact and keeping it until they look away. You have won a little mental battle. This is a small point but once you have won you are the dominant one.

Now I am not suggesting getting into a staring match with a prospect or audience. But you can really boost your authority right from the start of a meeting; and this only works at the beginning of a meeting. The first time you engage a person in eye contact, keep it and let them look away first. If they do not look away after a time it may be one to let go; and it will tell you about that person.

Eye contact and power exercise; this is a great exercise to give you lots of power. It will really help when you stand up in front of a group if you have done this all week before hand. This is best done on the street or in a shopping mall. Somewhere there are lots of strangers passing by.

Simply look at people as they pass. The natural instinct is to look away when we see someone looking back at us. But if you hold your stare and get them to look away first you have established dominance.

Do not do this to tattooed men of great height and girth. They may stare back and ask what you are looking at in a threatening manner. However do try this as much as you can in your daily life. Every time you see someone looking at you, look straight back at them. Hold it and they will look away first 99% of the time or more.

I love to do this, especially in a crowd. People in crowds often look down and avoid eye contact. If you do the opposite you can really boost your confidence. I fly a lot and when waiting for the bathroom I stand before the rows of passengers. Some naturally look at me as I wait. The normal thing to do is look away and feel uncomfortable standing exposed before all these eyes. Instead I make them look away first. This turns an uncomfortable situation in my favour.

When you get in front of an audience having done this exercise you will feel a lot more comfortable with all the eyes looking at you.

One final point on eye communication is to mention the slow blink. This is where some people feel the need to close their eyes and keep them shut for a few seconds. They seem to do this to accentuate their point; as if they are thinking about it and concentrating.

This will alienate your audience. You lose the connection you have built up and you can even come across as smug. I think of a priest giving a sermon who may use this as he preaches. He closes his eyes as he speaks as if communication with higher powers. I think I have seen this in a film somewhere, as I am not a church goer.

This slow blink is something that most people who do it, don't even know that they are. So ask your friends and family if you sometimes blink in this fashion. If you do, be aware of it and try and stop – especially when trying to have power and influence. You want to establish a link through eye contact and keep it.

Eye dart is also a common nervous gesture. This is where your eyes move rapidly around the room, as if looking for an exit. It makes you look shifty and untrustworthy. Remember that the eye factor is one of the most important ones in communicating a consistent message that gets through to the new brain.

Practice makes natural – exercises:

1. Gestures – practise gesticulating in front of a mirror. See what looks right and feels comfortable. Try the presidential thumbs up to accentuate points. See what feels right for you.
2. Facial expressions – again in front of the mirror see what your smile looks like. I found that what I thought was a smile was hardly noticeable. So try pushing a few big smiles across your face and see how they feel and look. Try smiling at work more and especially at home more. As much as you can; see the difference it will make in the way people respond to you – especially loved ones!
3. Eye contact – be ready when someone catches your eye don't look away – keep eye contact until they look away (not to be tried with loved ones). Do the shopping mall exercise. See how much more power you can get. Do it with a smile and it will feel even better and be twice as effective.