

61 Ways to Liberate Your Speaker Spirit

This information was compiled by Mary Marcdante for a keynote speech titled “Liberate Your Speaker Spirit” for the National Speaker’s Association (NSA) San Diego Chapter *Speak Like a Pro Day*. Mary's research included interviewing 21 top NSA speakers. Enjoy and take action! To book this program for your NSA chapter, contact Mary at mary@marymarcdante.com

NSA Speakers Answer the Question:

**What are the three most important things
a speaker can do to liberate their speaker spirit?**

Emory Austin, CSP, CPAE,; www.emoryaustin.com
Change, Customer Service, Leadership

1. Be passionate about something that people want to hear about -- so they can be profitable, effective, etc.
2. Spend as much time as possible on research, customizing so they say, “She did this for me. She knows what we need to be a great organization.”
3. Pay attention to the skill factor -- using your voice, the platform. Be captivating.

BE PASSIONATE
ABOUT SOMETHING

Researched and Presented by Mary Marcdante, Speaker/Author, NSA member since 1987
Helping People Stay Inspired, Enthusiastic, and Healthy in a Changing World
PO Box 2529, Del Mar, CA 92014 ~ ~ (858) 792-6786
Mary@MaryMarcdante.com ~ ~ www.MaryMarcdante.com

Dan Burrus, CSP, CPAE; www.BurrusResearch.com
Futurist, author of *TechnoTrends*

4. Speak what you're the most passionate about.

5. Use honesty and integrity as a guideline. We can inflate who we are and what we do beyond what honestly happened. At what point is embellishment good bad or harmful? What would someone do who wants the highest levels of integrity and honesty?

6. Become one with the audience. I fall in love with my audience. I feel these feelings of unbelievable love for them. I've done my homework. I know their problems. I try to get so in tune with them. I don't know who I'm speaking to tomorrow. I don't want to break my focus on my present audience. It's all in the power of focus. It's a focus on them, not me.

Jim Cathcart, CPAE, CSP, Cavett Winner, NSA Past President
Personal development, business development, sales; author: *The Acorn Principle*;
www.cathcart.com

7. Great speaking is NOT about content! It doesn't depend on having cutting edge material, nor does it require profound insights new to the listeners. What it does require is MEANING AND RELEVANCE. The message must mean something to THIS audience at this time. And it must be relevant to their world and their priorities.

8. You must learn to think of yourself as a product. Get outside your own point of view and see what you do well and do not do well. Seek coaching and input. Don't defend, explore. Notice your style. Think of the impression you create with your looks, sound, credentials, content, topic selections, and more.

9. Do only what you genuinely believe in. Don't just deliver book reports or news copy. Speak about what you think and feel and believe in relation to your topic.

Leslie Charles, CSP; www.whyiseveryonesocranky.com

Leadership, customer service, stress management; author: *Why Is Everyone So Cranky?*

10. Leave your ego in your hotel room or car. Output, output, output, when the audience gives you energy, you give it back to them - don't keep it.

11. Commit to your client. Never let people see your back. Don't make phone calls. Be there completely.

12. Keep a speaker journal -- How you felt before, after your speech, stories people told you. Really helpful in your development as a speaker, writer, and human being.

Chris Clarke-Epstein, CSP, NSA Past President; www.chrisclarke-epstein.com

Leadership, creativity, productivity; author: *The Instant Trainer; Simple Encounters*

13. As soon as you can, forget about yourself and focus on your audience- what they need to hear rather than what you want to say.

14. Do your homework - speaking to a group without doing preprogram research is like walking a tightrope without a safety net.

15. Learn how to tell stories, well. Nothing captures an audience better nor makes a point faster than the appropriate story told well!

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Mary-Ellen Drummond, CSP; author; www.medrummond.com
Presentation Skills, Motivation, author: *Fearless & Flawless Public Speaking*

16. Demonstrate Clarity and Purpose.

Every time we speak, we must know what it is we want to convey (Be able to say, "This is the 'big picture', in just 1-2 sentences.) Know what it is that we want our audiences to go away with.

17. Demonstrate Credibility & Integrity

We must be honest, original, and trust our own stories. Speak from our own work and life experience in order to create a positive and credible reputation.

18. Demonstrate Competence & Expertise.

Nothing replaces experience. Every time we speak, for free or for fee, we need to perform our best and hone our skills. Learn from every engagement and interaction.

Roxanne Emmerich, CSP, CMC; www.emmerichgroup.com
Change, Business Revitalization; author: *Thank God It's Monday!*

19. It's not about you. It's about how you can make a difference in the world and impact your audiences. When your focus is internal, the limiting internal voices, like "What right do I have speaking this group?" will come screaming back in your head. Focus on your audience and how you can help them.

20. Run your business as a business. Be accessible within an hour of an inquiry, or have a live person who can cover your calls during business hours. Clients want to know you will follow through immediately. They assume when you do, you will at their event too. The reverse is also true.

21. Hire excellent copywriters, graphic designers -- people who do support services. Do the research to find the right people.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

BE PATIENT

Patricia Fripp, CPAE, CSP, Cavett winner, NSA Past President, www.Fripp.com
Change, Customer Service, Coaching; author: *Make It, So You Don't Have To Fake It!*

22. Don't be impatient. Understand this is a long-term goal.

23. Develop your contact management system from scratch. Start with the people you now do business with. Let everybody you know that you have anew business and services. It's not your client's job to remember you; it is your responsibility to make sure they don't forget you.

24. Invest in the creation of your speech early. Starting from scratch, develop an original good talk. Get help earlier than you think you need it. Once you've done some work, go to a coach. It could be just getting a group of speaker friends together and helping each other, or a coach.

Lou Heckler, CPAE, CSP, www.louheckler.com
Leadership, Management

25. Get to know and like yourself. You will be spending an uncommon amount of time alone, even when you are in front of big audiences. Grow your material from your own experiences and stay authentic.

26. Use only your voice. I'm not talking about the actual sound that emanates from your lips, but that distinctive way of delivering material that only you have. Don't imitate or even emulate others. Work on bettering you. Ask, "What experiences and episodes in my life bring me to this idea?" and go from there.

27. Keep family connections and personal health topmost. If you don't feel well physically and psychologically, you are of no value to us in the audience. Don't be lured by dollar signs or clapping hands if they violate your wellness.

John Kalpus, www.JohnKalpus.com

Technology, author: *WinTips for Windows 95, 98, and Beyond*

28. Be full of wonder and curiosity about your subject. Curiosity and wonder fuel our personal development and energize the people in our audiences.

29. Live your topic. This makes you real to your audience. Go deep with your insights and awareness of how your topic makes a positive difference in their lives.

30. Have fun with your audience. Share your own successes and failures and look for the humor in the failure. It's always there.

LIVE YOUR TOPIC

Janet Lapp, CPAE, CSP, RN, Ph.D.; www.lapp.com

Change, Risk-taking, author of *Plant Your Feet Firmly in Mid-Air*

31. Discipline yourself. It takes lots of hours. Freedom is responsibility to your art.

32. Be yourself, don't need approval, don't try to impress the audience.

33. Work your craft, study acting, voice, movement, storytelling, humor.

DISCIPLINE YOURSELF

Mary Marcdante, www.marymarcdante.com

Appreciation, Relationship Skills, Stress Management, author: *My Mother, My Friend*

34. Bring yourself and your audience to the platform.

It's easy to cite research, quote others, and tell funny stories; the hard part is sharing your challenges, how you overcame them, and what you learned in a way that uplifts and involves the audience. Your audience wants to know how YOU walk your talk and they want to be invited to join you.

35. Energize your four levels daily. Your energy (health) is primary! Spiritual (meditation, nature walk, prayer, singing), intellectual (list 10 new ideas a day, affirmations, visualize); emotional (FEEL your feelings, connect w/ loved ones); physical (move your body 30 min/day - walk! eat @least 3 fresh veggies). You are a role model for your audience. Which level needs more attention today?

36. Appreciate *everything*. All of your life experiences are a potential story that could change the people in your audience. Keep a tape recorder with you, journal, write one story every day that fits your topics. Use it to inspire yourself in tough times and write the book that will keep your message alive in others.

Rosita Perez, CPAE, CSP, Cavett Award Winner, AMA Speaker of the Year
Life, Relationships, Creative Living programs, randrperez@aol.com

37. Release your spirit in your life, in the daily things you do. Live so in-the-moment that it is almost automatic to make an aside that is totally unplanned but so "in the moment" that the audience remembers that above all else we so carefully crafted. That is when our REAL self is revealed.

38. Overcome your fear of yourself. It is your differentness that appeals and stays with people. Have the guts and take the scary road. Shine your flashlight into the darkness even though you are not sure what you will encounter.

39. It takes faith - in yourself and in your Guide as you go through life. Without that trust and faith, all turns to dust.

Connie Podesta, CPAE, CSP, www.conniepodesta.com
Change, Motivation, Relationships

40. NEVER accept a job (no matter how desperate for bookings, in fact, ESPECIALLY when desperate) that you are not totally comfortable doing. So often we have the urge to say yes to anything "Oh sure I can do that!!" when we really aren't qualified or ready. Better to say no then to ever look bad on stage. This business is totally about word of mouth.

Nido Qubein, CPAE, CSP, Cavett Winner, NSA Past President
Sales, management, change; www.nidoqubein.com

41. Be substantive and relevant.

42. Establish credible positioning with your experience, knowledge, resume.

43. Think MACRO (the big picture) as you take care of the MICRO.

Lorna Riley, CSP; www.LornaRiley.com
Customer Service, Leadership; author: *Quest for Your Best*

44. Know Yourself. The audience will smell anything unauthentic a mile away. Speak from the deep voice, your pit, your soul, take chances, have a passion for what you speak about. The problem is when you get into I should, I have to...

45. Focus on the joy of being there, not are they going to like me, or how am I doing. Break the rules.

46. Stop having agendas. It's the same thing as the tyranny of expectation. You lose something - your spirit can't soar. Until you set it free, it can't soar. An agenda puts your spirit in a cage.

Grady Jim Robinson , CPAE, CSP; www.gradyjim.com

Life as a work of art, superb storyteller, author of *Did I Ever Tell You About the Time...*

47. Be willing to expose your own frailties, failures, triumphs too and tragedies. Some speakers are reluctant to admit their failures and talk a lot about their victories. Stories that show openness and honesty resonate with every audience. To have stories to tell means that person must work at the inner life. Journal writing, reading, inner work is absolutely necessary for a serious speaker.

48. Have a passion or conviction for your message. The scary thing about passion and conviction is that you can be wrong about your message. We still must insist that a speaker must have a burning, burning message that they simply must shout from the housetops. The Universe will even it all out in the end, but every messenger must tell his or her story, viewpoint, message with passion.

49. Never underestimate the mysterious power of humor. Humor serves to melt down the resistance that may be in any listener. Humor is the most powerful tool I know to win over an audience which includes stories, music, slides, audio visual, audience participation, throwing money or candy, or whatever. Humor is a universal winner.

NEVER
UNDERESTIMATE
THE MYSTERIOUS
POWER OF HUMOR

Glenna Salsbury, CPAE, CSP, Cavett winner, NSA Past President
Leadership, Customer Satisfaction, Motivation and Inspiration;
www.glennasalsbury.com

50. Ask yourself some soul-searching questions in order to obtain real clarity about your career. Why am I doing this? (To make money? To entertain people? To share a burning message?) Be very honest so that the next two factors have a solid foundation.

51. Now, write out your life purpose in one sentence. Not really a mission statement but the gut feeling as to why you are on the earth.

52. Create a powerful 30-minute presentation that incorporates the reality of number one and number two above. Pour everything you believe in, from the core of your being, into that speech. Then give that speech for free at least 20 times, intentionally. The danger is to be a speaker without having a burning message that grips you. So the ultimate goal is to find that core of your being!

Barbara Sanfilippo, CPAE, CSP; www.romanosanfilippo.com
Sales and Customer Service, author: *Dream Big!*

53. Have an intention to have fun and say what's most important. Of course I am prepared, but when I said, "Barbara you're just going to go out there and be you and have a great time; just be there and do it." I used to be so concerned about me; now it's about being there with the audience.

54. Prepare well and then be willing to go off your script and speak from what's happening in the moment. The more I allow myself to go off exactly what I planned to do; not script; go in the moment and be there, I'm able to respond to what's going on in the moment. Be more organized and less planned, minute-by-minute.

55. Just before you begin your speech, say a prayer for what you wish for the audience and offer gratitude to your higher power for helping you. This has helped me dramatically.

Richard Thieme, www.thiemeworks.com

Living on the Edge; The Wave of the Future, Technology, author: *Islands In the Clickstream*

56. Self-knowledge - put yourself on the edge; do not turn away from your deeper knowing.

57. Discipline yourself. Create habits to carry you through the difficult times.

58. Include people in your life who enliven and empower you, make you your best, who can tell you the truth -- people who challenge you and won't let you sell out on yourself. No dead people. You want people who will say to you: I know you don't want me to let you get away with this.

George Walther, CPAE, CSP, www.GeorgeWalther.com

Sales & Marketing, Communication; author: *Power-Talking*

59. Think of the stuff about which you have knowledge in terms of a big outline. Work on big paper. List the main categories of things about which you have knowledge. What is the body of work? What is the evidence in which you've gathered your knowledge? It allows you to modularize or chunk down what you know about. Check the boxes of the things that seem most pressing to you.

60. Speak a lot. Seminar company or speak for free. Speak so often that tomorrow you could show up and talk if you were asked to fill in for another speaker. Face as many audience situations as possible.

61. Take the short cut to the lesson, which says NET is more important than GROSS. Don't get impressed with the gross income you're making, watch what you're keeping; it took me five years to figure out that the \$30,000 a month I was making was costing me \$31,000 a month.

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To learn more about the National Speakers Association go to www.nsaspeaker.org. For Mary's personal insights on the National Speakers Association and professional speaking, go to www.marymarcdante.com/nsa.htm. To book "Liberate Your Speaker Spirit" for your NSA chapter, contact Mary at mary@marymarcdante.com