

How to Give a Keynote Speech That Everyone Will Remember

People respond to passion.

 By Quora

CREDIT: Getty Images

What makes a keynote speech compelling? originally appeared on [Quora](#) - the knowledge sharing network where compelling questions are answered by people with unique insights.

Answer by [Josh Levs](#), Author, Former CNN & NPR Journo, on [Quora](#):

Every keynote you do is an honor. Understanding this is the first, and most important, rule. Even when I have a busy week doing three keynotes in one city, or in three cities for that matter, I am acutely aware that my stepping onto each stage is the result of a group of organizers, and a hopeful audience, looking to me for deliverables.

So my job as keynote speaker is to make sure they get what they came for -- and more. That means knowing about them, the organization, the reason they're there. It means knowing the ethos and goals of the group. It also means knowing what else they're hearing from other speakers that day.

That's why I speak directly with the organizers of each event in advance, to find out whether they have specific requests for what I will and won't touch on. It's also why I try to attend as many of the other speeches and events as I can. I use that time to tweak and fine tune my talk, so it's a natural accompaniment.

People respond to passion. So a great keynote is driven by that. When you're passionate about what you're there to say, people can feel it. When I train keynote speakers, I go over things like body language and eye contact that help invoke passion in a positive way.

It's crucial to design your talk as a human story. You can't be all about facts and figures. Share your journey as it relates to the topic. Take the audience on an emotional ride, through what you felt.

Be honest. People sense what's fake very quickly. It's a major turnoff.

Don't boast. Talk about your struggles and failures as much as your successes, or even more. Explain the lessons you learned and how they apply to the topic.

I never write down what I'm going to say. I know that some people need to -- particularly those who are invited to speak because of their fame, not because they're particularly good speakers. But I feel much better just knowing the general order of the points I plan to make, looking at the audience the entire time, and talking.

Feel the energy in the room. Notice how people are responding. If they're not focused on you, punch up your energy.

Don't use lots of slides with lots of text and numbers. No one will remember what's there. If you use slides, keep them simple with just a couple of points, all bolstering the central thesis. I like to use video clips and images along the way, but just a few.

Remember that every second you have up there is a gift, and treat it as such. This room full of people has given you one of the biggest gifts anyone can give -- their time. The more you focus on earning and deserving that gift, the more the audience will see and appreciate you. They'll know you respect them. And they'll respect you.

This question originally appeared on [Quora](#) - the knowledge sharing network where compelling questions are answered by people with unique insights. You can follow Quora on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Google+](#). More questions:

- [Public Speaking: What is Toastmasters like?](#)
- [Communication: If someone asks if you are intelligent, what's the best way to answer without sounding conceited?](#)
- [Keynotes: Why do events name their presentations "keynotes"?](#)