

Speak to be Remembered and Repeated

Written by Patricia Fripp

"Speak to be remembered and repeated." Isn't that the goal of every communicator- to be remembered and repeated?

This is a key idea I reinforce at every Fripp Speaking School. (The November event was such a success that three more have already been booked for 2007.) Actually, it is a key idea every time I have the opportunity to discuss speaking and presentation skills. Yes, it's easier said than done. Here are a few key ideas.

- Speak in shorter sentences.
- Edit your sentences to a nub. Remember, Jerry Seinfeld said, "I will spend an hour taking an eight word sentence and making it five." In comedy, the fewer the words between the set-up and the punch word, the bigger the laugh.
- Don't step on your punch word which should be the final word or idea in the sentence. (Yes, this works for Jerry and his comedian brethren, and it also works for business communicators.)
- Choose the best punch word. For example, in the sentence, "You have to make an important decision today," your punch word should be "decision." So switch it around: "Today, you have to make an important DECISION!"
- If you have a sentence with two important words or phrases, put the more important is at the end. "Today, YOU have to make an important DECISION." Or, "The important DECISION today is going to be made by YOU."
- Perfect your pause. Deliver your punch word and then pause- and pause- and pause. Give your listeners time to digest what you've just said. Get comfortable with silence, and don't be tempted to fill it with "um's."
- Repeat your key ideas more than once.
- Say something memorable.

Let us look at a few recent examples from the memorial for 60 Minutes' Ed Bradley.

Fellow 60 Minutes reporter Steve Kroft said, "I learned a lot from Ed Bradley, and not just about journalism. I learned a lot about friendship, manners, clothes, wine, freshly cut flowers- which he had delivered to his office every week- and the importance of stopping and smelling them every once in awhile."

Surprise guest Bill Clinton said, "Ed Bradley was a brilliant, insatiable, curious traveler on a relentless quest to get to the bottom of things. He was like the great jazz musicians he so admired. He always played in the key of reason. His songs

were full of the notes of facts; but he knew to make the most of music you have to improvise. We'll never forget what his solos were: the disarming smile; the disconcerting stare; the highly uncomfortable stretches of silence, the deceptively dangerous questions, and the questions that would be revealing, no matter what your answer was. Watching him was mesmerizing - because you knew you were watching a master at work."



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