

5 Dynamic Speech Openings

to **HOOK** your Audience



And no... a joke is NOT one of them! These tips are in no particular order. Choose one that suits your speech the best, or add your own idea!

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1

A startling statistic or statement

This is a statistic or statement that makes your audience listen up, thinking they must be hearing wrong. They can't wait to find out what the heck you mean.

The most effective use of the startling opening I've ever seen was done by a nationally recognized environmentalist who began by saying that climate change shouldn't be important to the ministry of the environment. Huh??? She paused, as we thought "what is she on?" Then, she banged her fist on the table and said, "It's a matter of national security!!!!!!" In other words, it goes way beyond the ministry level. Goosebumps. After that, we hung on every word!

2

A personal story or anecdote

Audiences love to feel a connection with the speaker. If you can share a story that demonstrates your journey with the topic, you become more credible. Another benefit is that if you get nervous, this is the least threatening way to begin because you are just telling a story about yourself! Just make sure the story is relevant to your topic, and your audience will be completely engaged!

3

Ask a question

This is another great way to open your speech, especially if you suffer from nervousness. Ask a question that requires people to put up their hands, and raise your own hand to demonstrate. Make sure you choose a question that you are likely to have people in the audience who can raise their hand! "How many of you like chocolate?" for example. Rather than "How many of you have lived in Bora Bora?" Nothing worse than no hands being raised. The goal is to establish connection, so you want to ask a question that elicits a positive response, and leads into your topic.

4

Introduce a case study that you weave into your speech

If your topic is somewhat dry, find a case study to make it more relatable. Start by introducing the person/family/company, and then weave that story into your speech so that there is always a practical application to your content.

For example, if you speak on building a business, why not start with a beginner entrepreneur, and explain how he or she took your advice and established a successful business? If you speak on health, talk about a family who took your advice and changed their lives! The possibilities are endless!

5

An inspirational quote

There are so many inspirational quotes that can capture the audience's attention. You can google 'inspirational quotes' to find one that is just perfect for your opening. I do recommend that you read it verbatim from your notes or have it on a power-point slide, so that your nerves don't cause you to stumble. Remember, the beginning of your speech is where you will likely experience your SECOND highest level of nervousness!

You can do this! After every speech, evaluate how you think the opening went, and decide if that opening was a good choice, or if you want to try a different one next time. It gets easier, the more you do it!