

Influencing | From the Front

Proven Influence Strategies from Influence Expert Roberto Monaco for Getting More of What You Want

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Why *Wanting* to Speak Well Can Be The Very Reason You Suck at Speaking

A couple of weeks ago I was conducting a coaching call with one of my clients, a very smart and successful businessman. When I say he is smart, I am saying he is "Michael Scofield smart" (for those familiar with the TV show Prison break)! This guy always asks profound questions about presentation and influence skills that are so relevant!

Through out our conversation, we talked about the fear of being judged, and how it stops most people from presenting effectively to live groups, webinars, conference calls, etc.

One of my core beliefs is that **EVERY PERSON IN THE WORLD** has a powerful story to share and a life-changing message to deliver. We all have a reservoir of amazing ideas within, hundreds of powerful and inspirational life- experiences, and when we take the ownership to communicate them to groups using different platforms (video, books, movies, live talks, workshops, webinars, etc)--lives are literally transformed.

In my experience, the majority of people do not tap into that power, or are not comfortable owning the power of their personal story because they allow the "fear of being judged" get into their way.

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This fear creates a behavior called "crowd validation", where the presenter puts himself in a weaker position because he is looking for some type of approval. This "crowd validation" behavior causes the presenter to go internal (inside his head) and creates some type of weakening self-talk:

- Do they like me?
- How do I sound?
- Do they like my ideas?
- Am I going to make a mistake?
- Am I going to forget the content?
- Am I going to be funny? Boring?

The list goes on and on...

People who engage in "crowd validation" allow their fear to eat their certainty away, so they become uncertain about their message and what they can do to help their audience.

So as I was explaining this to my friend and client, I told him that successful presenters do not experience this fear of being judged often, and if they do, they have figured out a strategy to deal with it very effectively. Therefore, the best presenters in the world are able to spend most of their time being external, very present and aware of what is going on with the audience, and they only go internal (inside their heads) to search for the information when needed (and they do not have a self-limiting dialogue)

At that point my client asked me this question:

"So if I am external and noticing how the audience is reacting to my message so I can adjust it, isn't that the same thing as asking for validation (approval) from the crowd?"

That is a great question and that is the reason I decided to write this article. First, I want to give you some distinctions before I tell you how I answered his question.

Here are two concepts you must understand:

Being Internal: You are internal when you are inside of your head, thinking and processing information. It is a good thing, we all do it. However, when you are conducting group presentations, you want to be external for the most part so you can be noticing how effective your message is. If you are internal too long, you end up missing out on how the crowd is reacting to your message and that could lead to loss of rapport and emotional engagement. In addition to that, when people engage in a "crowd validation" behavior and they go internal, most of the self-talk that is created is disempowering (are they liking me, am I saying the right thing, etc..?).

Being External: You are totally certain about your message, your impact, your role, and you are noticing how the audience is reacting to you. It feels like the information is coming through you; you do not spend much time inside of your head. Yes, you want to read the audience and get valuable information (body language, energy of the room, questions, subtle movements, etc) in order to adjust your communication strategy (more logic, more emotion, more exercises, etc), but you are not "doubting yourself", you are just being flexible and noticing how the audience is assimilating your message. **Being external means you are focused on your audience NOT you.**

So I told my client:

"No, it is not the same thing. When you are external you are not asking for validation because you are absolutely certain about who you are, your message, and the positive impact you are about to create. You are just measuring the effectiveness of your message; if it is working you keep doing the same thing, if it is not working you are being flexible enough to change your approach. **When reading the audience's reactions, you are NOT looking for validation...you are using sensory acuity to see if you are being effective in 'moving' your audience.**"

Because when you are engaged in crowd validation, you experience fear (at some level), and you are going internal way too much to address your negative self talk; eventually losing the connection with the crowd.

In some drastic cases, some unaware presenters are externally getting the audiences' feedback, filtering it and reinforcing their internal negative self-talk.

For example, let's say you are presenting and someone crosses their arms and you automatically use that information (crossing the arms) to reinforce your internal dialogue ("they are not liking my message, they are resisting me"), instead of using a different communication strategy (have people to write down something so that person has to uncross the arms).

I do not know if my client went internal right away after this answer, but I did hear a pause for awhile...**it sounded something like a breakthrough!**

The takeaway is that the more you are in alignment with your message, meaning, you know your content inside

out and you live and breath your message, the more external you will be.

Also, if you truly believe that your message can make your audience even better, then your limiting self-talk will virtually disappear, so every time you go internal you will find a different voice, a voice that says "Yes, I am having the best time ever", or "dang, I am good," or "I can handle anything", or "WOW!!, I loved this article".

Upcoming Events

Event	Date
Influencing from the Front Event, San Diego	March 12-14th (Sold Out)
T Harv Ecker-Guerilla Business School, Orange County	March 24th
Super Charged Business Summit, Las Vegas	April 16th-17th
Influencing from the Front Event, San Diego	April 23rd-25th

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