

Presentation Tips!

Recently, I have been quite interested in public speaking: the climax of the forensics season is starting up (competitive speech and debate), I have been giving some great presentations about Bleed Shamelessly and women's rights, and I have even led some writer's workshops for my school newspaper! As a traditionally introverted person, it shocks me how passionate I get when standing up in front of a room of people and sharing my ideas. It can be incredibly terrifying! So, why do I enjoy it? Personally, when I public speak - in any manner or form - I feel like I have the captivation of people. In whatever circumstance I am speaking in, I was given the opportunity to inform and persuade others, that is an incredibly powerful position to hold, and when used correctly, the implications can be grand.

So today, I wanted to give you my top five tips for giving excellent advocacy presentations!

1. **Know your audience:** Possibly the most important aspect to giving an advocacy presentation. How you go about the structure, tone, claims and even sources in your presentation depends entirely on your audience. Ask yourself: How old is my primary demographic? Where do they work? What are their political and cultural ideologies? At a first glance, these seem like oversimplified generalizations... and, they are! Of course no one group is going to agree entirely on a candidate or all believe in universal health care, but much like a business marketing to a specific demographic, you have to generalize your listeners. Take a presentation I conducted earlier this year as an example! I was lecturing a class full of high-school students, taking a restorative justice class. It is not too far-fetched of a statement to claim that they are all fairly liberal. Thus, I could take my "The Basics of Advocacy" to the next level! If they already knew the difference between a 'Vision' and 'Mission' statement, we could move onto concepts like 'Networking' or the importance of listening as an activist. In other circumstances, let's say that I was presenting to a group of educators about the importance of providing menstrual products in school restrooms -- which I plan on doing later this year! Few of them may recognize the nuances of an advocacy campaign, thus, I may cover the fundamentals a bit more in-depth.
2. **Visual aids and artifacts are your friends!** We often forget the importance of visual aids and physical objects to represent your words when focussing so deeply on memorizing or perfecting your words. When someone is speaking to you, 60% of their words go in one ear and out of the other! Thus, providing a visual representation of what you are saying is a great tool in portraying your ideas to the listeners. When I was presenting about advocacy campaigns in said restorative justice class, I not only had a presentation that summarized each point I made, but I brought in different buttons, letters, newspapers, posters, and other ideas for them to consider!
3. **Teach your ideas through a story!** Often times, we focus too much on the importance of structure, and ignore the personal aspect to our presentations. It is far less complex for people to comprehend when backed by a narrative of sorts. Whether it be a hypothetical example or a personal story, it is easier for the public to assemble the

pieces of your presentation through an anecdote. On top of the comprehensive up-sides, when a story is involved a sense of personalism is added. When concepts are applied to actual human beings, more weight and importance is portrayed to the audience.

4. **Be Relatable!** Now, I am not referring to the juvenile common internet jokes that depict experiences that are innate to humankind; but rather, the strategy of appealing to your audience by using terms that they would actually understand. In no way am I degrading the intelligence or ability of the listener, I am simply explaining that they are often not experts in the topic you are presenting about. Recently I attended a presentation about race-relations in America at my school. I am certainly not an expert or even a novice of understanding the nuances and complexities of race-relations in America; however, when it comes to menstrual equity, I think I have a pretty firm grasp on it. Thus, when I am explaining the concept of 'menstrual equity' to an audience, I define terms before I explain how to use them. For instance, I define what the 'Pink Tax' is, before explaining how it has detrimental impacts on our society.
5. Don't get too stuck to your script! As a forensicator, I am a master memorizer. I can memorize a speech and recite it with as much vigor and excitement as if I were making it up on the spot! That being said, presentations are a completely different deal. They are more casual, talkative, and demonstrational. Presentations allow for questions, pauses for laughter, a break in the script, and genuine reactions. When presenting, don't be afraid to stray away from your script! It will have excellent benefits as it keeps the information and engagement exciting!

If you are interested in learning more about forming and giving presentations, check out a [presentation](#) I gave to a Restorative Justice Class earlier this year!

Have any more specific questions, reach out to me [here!](#)