

LESSON-3 PUBLIC SPEAKING AS COMMUNICATION

Picturing yourself as a public speaker may be difficult, just as it was for Mary in of, opening vignette. At first Mary saw public speaking as a mysterious still possessed only by the leaders in our society. But she soon realized that she had been practicing for public speaking for a long time. As an infant, Mary developed the most essential tool of communication -language. When her grandfather explained to her why flowers bloom and why she must stay always from fire, she was being introduced to two of the great func-tions of human communication, *informing*, and *persuading*. Later, as she de-veloped close friends and talked with them on every subject under the sun, she began practicing the interaction skills that are central to communica-tion: when and how to listen as well as speak, and what kind of behaviors either advance or impede the flow of feelings and ideas as we interact.

What happens when three people become six, when six become twelve, or when twelve become twenty-four? Public speaking is really only an en-largement of the conversational skills we have been practicing all of our lives. On the other hand, there are some distinctive features of public speaking as communication which we must understand.

Public Speaking as Expanded Conversation

Public speaking retains three important characteristics of conversation. First, it preserves the natural directness and spontaneity of conversation. Second, it features the colorful, compelling qualities of good conversation. And third, it is tuned to the reactions of listeners.

Public Speaking Preserves the Directness and Spontaneity of. Conver-sation. Even though a message has been carefully planned and prepared, it must come to life before the live audience. Consider the following open-ing to a self-introductory speech:

It may seem hot today, but it's not near as hot as good 01' Plainview, Texas, where I was born and reared. I almost said "roasted." John has, just told us about the joys of urban living. Now you're going to hear about another lifestyle; what you might call a "country-fried" lifestyle.

Compare that opening with:

My name is Sam Johnson, and I come from Plainview, Texas.

The first version, because of its references to weather conditions and to an earlier speech, seems fresh and spontaneous. The "us" and "you," along with the casual humorous remarks, suggest that the speaker is reaching out to his audience. The second, unless

presented with a great deal of oomph, will sound quite ordinary. the first opening invites listening: the second invites yawning.

Public Speaking Is Colorful and Compelling. We enjoy listening to good conversationalists because of their colorful speech. It naturally follows that we are often influenced by what they have to say. Consider the following development of the "heat" theme from the 'above example:

That place was so hot it would make hell seem air-conditioned! It was so hot it would make an armadillo sweat! It was so hot that rattlesnakes. would rattle just to fan themselves!

Compare those words with the following:

The average summer day in Plainview was often over a hundred degrees.

The literal meaning of both statements is not that different, but the first contains the kind of vivid, lively conversational qualities that make audiences want to listen.

Public Speaking as Communication. Public speaking builds upon the basic communication skills we originally develop as we acquire language and learn how to converse with others. As expanded conversation, public speaking preserves the natural directness and spontaneity and the colorful and compelling qualities of good conversation. Like conversation, public speaking is tuned to the reactions of listeners and: makes adjustments to this *feedback*. Speeches are also designed with the reactions of listeners in mind.

In contrast with conversation, public speaking defines the roles of speaker and listener more clearly. Public speaking gives prominence to the *speaker*. The *ethos* of a speaker, based on audience perceptions of the speaker's competence and integrity, likableness and forcefulness, can be critical to the success of a speech. A successful speech is carefully planned to be internally consistent and complete. Its *message*, the structure of ideas, words, presentation aids, vocal patterns, and body language, travels through a *medium* that connects the speaker with an *audience*. The speaker *encodes* the message, the listener *decodes* its meaning. Misunderstandings arise when message and meaning are far apart. The *communication environment* can promote or impede understanding. To achieve effective- communication, the speaker must overcome *interference* that can block or distort the message. Successful communication can result in the *transformation* of speaker, audience, and the knowledge they share.

Public speaking as Communication

KINDS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

How to put Your Message Across

What is the best way of achieving the aim?

Lecture - formal or informal with good supporting material?

Briefing - informal?

Discussion - review or ask series of questions?

Meeting - with agenda book or paper?

Public Communication

Public communication is opposed to private communication. A type of communication with the people in general including a particular section of people. A way of transmitting message to the public. As the name suggests, a piece of public information, is the subject matter of which concerns the public and is, therefore, of public interest or importance. Written or verbal communication to the editor of newspapers on various current problems or grievance of the day. Dailies "and periodicals generally reserve space for public opinion to ventilate grievances, suggestions etc. The subject matter of a public communication may cover public transport, railway safety sanitation, hygiene tax matters, population problem, unemployment, pollution, politics, corruption. Public address system is generally used in oral public communication of public address, messages, appeals, welcome address, farewell speech, vote of thanks, appeals etc.

Personal Communication (Private)

Information exchange between persons either inside the organization or outside on personal or private matters is called "private" or "personal communication." Several informal matters may figure in private communication. Domestic matters, wedding, funeral, memorial, betrothal, upanayanam, dinner invitation, cradle ceremony, birthday and other messages on social matters. Personal communication may take place between the superiors, and subordinates and the communicators as well as between equals. There is no channel for the flow of information. It may "be one-way or two-way personal communication. The personal communication can be effected through several methods such as spoken words, written words, physical expressions or significant gestures. To be effective; both transmission and reception of message must be there.