



# SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE

## TOP SPEAKERS CHECKLIST

BY MELANIE SPRING OF BRANDED CONFIDENCE

Print & use this checklist every time you speak. Whether it's in front of one person or thousands. If you do it right, you'll get more business, more speaking, and more sales than ever before.

### BEFORE

#### YOUR TALK:

- 1. Ask a LOT of questions.**  
Put together a survey with questions about everything you need to know before you speak. Send it to the event organizer. This should include where, their fee, their travel considerations, who you're speaking in front of, dress code, and their hopes/dreams.
- 2. Have a simple, yet solid agreement.**  
Make sure your agreement includes who pays for what & when, the details you discussed about your talk & its impact, their expectations of you, your expectations of them, and what happens if either of you have to cancel.
- 3. Be easy to work with.**  
Give them everything they need to market you - social media, content, hashtags, photos, logos, everything. Make it so simple they can't possibly mess up the marketing. (And don't be a prima donna if they mess up!)
- 4. Practice your talk.**  
I mean it. Do NOT skip this. Practice. A LOT. Don't wing it. You might be great, but even the best speakers practice a lot. If you do NOTHING else on this list, check this box over and over. Rinse & repeat. You will never practice too much. Promise.
- 5. Memorize your first 10 words.**  
My favorite tip for getting the nerves to disappear is to know your first 10 words like the back of your hand. No matter how big your audience is, they don't want to hear "hello, thanks for having me." Walk out & say those 10 words. Then go back to the previous step & practice.
- 6. Clean up your slides.**  
Less is more - create more slides, less on each slide. Everyone thinks their slides are amazing - very few slide-decks are any good. Keep each slide simple. One thought per slide. Use big, sans serif fonts. Dark background, white text. More photos, less lists. (Hire a dang designer, please!)

### DURING

#### YOUR TALK:

- 7. Dress for your brand.**  
Every meeting/event/conference has a dress code. Listen to them when they tell you theirs - but dress yourself the way YOU dress. When I hear business-casual, I wear business-badass. Even if you wear a black suit, add a statement piece & stand out. Remember: dress for style AND comfort.
- 8. Get rid of the podium.**  
Ask the AV people to move it off to the side during your talk. You want to use the whole stage and if there's a podium, you'll use it as a crutch to keep from freaking out. Get it out of the way so the photos of you speaking aren't being blocked. If you can't move it, stay away from it.
- 9. Bring your energy.**  
You have YOUR level of energy in your talks. Some of us bring a lot, others don't need to. Pump yourself up before your talk - flexing in the mirror, power-posing, chest-bumping your bestie, whatever it takes to get you psyched up. Staring at your shoes & worrying is NOT going to work.
- 10. PAUSE.**  
Yes, I know I just said to bring your energy - but BREATHE before you begin. I speak super fast in everyday life - I get it. Your audience needs to you to pause between sentences and sections. You can talk fast - AS LONG AS YOU PAUSE. It gives them time to catch up.
- 11. Use your whole body.**  
Don't be that guy with his hand in his pocket - fiddling. Don't be that gal with her hands flailing around without purpose. Use your hands, your arms, your whole body to engage your audience. Show them how far something was. Show them how big it was. Don't just tell them, show them.
- 12. Use small words.**  
No one in any audience likes to feel stupid. And you don't want your audience googling your words while you're talking. If you're sharing big words, share their definitions. If you don't need to use big words, use small ones. Help them understand you by talking to them on their level.
- 13. Kill the put-downs.**  
Someone once told you self-deprecating humor was cute - it's not. And neither are the millennial slams, the "you get it, you're from here" and the "you've got kids" jokes. Few speakers are truly funny - learn how to make people laugh without putting anyone down. Including yourself.
- 14. Raise your hand.**  
When you want your audience to engage with you, show them how you want engagement. If you want them to raise their hand to answer a question, raise your hand when you ask. It's not church - not everyone knows the call-and-response style you know. Help them participate in your talk.
- 15. Give them something.**  
Your audience wants to keep in touch with you. Tell them about a free download, mini-course, blog post, fill-in-the-blank you have. Ask for their cards, don't ask them to sign up while you're speaking. Then email them. Do NOT make it a sales pitch or use marketing language.

# AFTER

## YOUR TALK:

- 16. Plan to stay.**  
This is one of the most underrated and underutilized sales tools. If you go early and listen to the other speakers, you can improv their ideas into your talk. If you stay after, people will feel like you're approachable and come up to talk about you. Make the time to listen.
- 17. Ask for a testimonial.**  
Ask the organizers how you did and then ask to use it for your marketing. They're not going to write one unless you ask. Ask. And remind them. You can even write a draft one they can edit & approve if it will speed things up. Even if you just want your boss to tell you that you did a good job. Ask!
- 18. Use testimonials to get more gigs.**  
And not just on your website or for your references. Target specific places & clients you can do this talk for again - and use your testimonials in the email you send. They'll be WAY more likely to book you if someone from the same industry/ organization referred you.
- 19. Ask for referrals.**  
The people you're speaking in front of know more people like them. ESPECIALLY if you're not getting paid, be really clear that you want their referrals if they enjoyed listening to you. Ask at the event and again afterward. Don't be weird, but know how you want to ask before you say it.
- 20. Send a love note.**  
NO ONE sends thank you's anymore. Send a card, postcard, or bit of love (I send stickers) through the mail to the organizers and anyone else who helped get you the stage. Stand out - easily. And ask for those referrals.

## ROCK IT!

Now you have a list of the top 20 items every speaker should know before, during, and after a talk.

## ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS

# GET OUT THERE AND GIVE YOUR TALK!

And then make it better. You're an ever-evolving human and your talks should be as well. Rock your talk again, assess yourself, make it better, and do it again. The more you rock your talk, the more you'll speak with confidence.

And if you want to learn how to craft a kickass talk and/or deliver it better than ever before, jump into **SPEAK With Confidence**. I have the solo program (with lots of community love) AND corporate private workshops with me in-person. [brandedconfidence.com/speak](http://brandedconfidence.com/speak)

Regardless, I'm in the Kickass Humans Club every day answering questions, asking questions, and finding more inspiration from all of you. Check it out: [kickasshumansclub.com](http://kickasshumansclub.com)

Share this checklist with your friends: [bit.ly/SWCspeakerchecklist](http://bit.ly/SWCspeakerchecklist)

XOXO *Melanie Spring*

WANT TO START SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE? SIGN UP AT: [BRANDEDCONFIDENCE.COM/SPEAK](http://BRANDEDCONFIDENCE.COM/SPEAK)

WORK WITH MELANIE (OR BRING HER TO YOU): [MELANIESPRING.COM](http://MELANIESPRING.COM)

SEND HER A LOVE NOTE: [MELANIE@BRANDEDCONFIDENCE.COM](mailto:MELANIE@BRANDEDCONFIDENCE.COM)

INSTA & TWITTER: [@MELANIESPRING](https://www.instagram.com/MELANIESPRING) | [#ROCKANYSTAGE](https://twitter.com/ROCKANYSTAGE)