**A One-Minute Talk on Giving a One-Minute Talk**

What follows is a one-minute talk on how to give a one-minute talk.

Or two minutes. Or three. Or the State of the Union. The fundamentals are the same no matter how long you talk.

I give you four rules -- plus one image.

**Rule Number 1:** What’s your message? You speak to leave your audience smarter – from a finding, a warning, an explanation or even a mood.

**Rule Number 2:** Keep it simple. Use familiar words. Clear explanations. Don’t use a complex, abstract measure of income like “200% of the poverty level,” but a concrete, earthy “family of four struggling on $30,000 a year.”

But, note: simplicity is hard. That perfect *bon mot* rarely pops out instantaneously.

Case in point: It took Stephen Sondheim, the famed Broadway composer and lyricist, all the way until the opening night of his *“Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*,” to find the show-stopping number – “Comedy Tonight” – that launched 900-plus performances and captured a Tony for Best Musical.

So: have a message. Keep it simple, as difficult as that may be.

Now **Rule Number 3:** Repetition is good. Why is repetition good? Because your listeners cannot *re-hear* what you are *saying*. They depend entirely on your voice to understand.

And, lastly, **Rule Number 4:** Practice. Sorry, no shortcuts here. Nothing beats practice.

And out loud. Not in your head.

It calms your nerves. It focuses your audience on *what* you’re saying – because you are not *stumbling* to say it.

So: That’s it. Four rules:

* *Message*;
* *Simplicity*;
* *Repetition;*
* *Practice.*

And that one image I mentioned?

It’s your listeners’ ears. At every step, their ears are all they have to take in your message.

Remember that. It will make all the difference.

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