



**SOLD TO THE FINE**  
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# Speak to Inspire Action

Tips to help you speak and present in a way that  
will inspire others to join your cause

In order for our world to change for the better, great ideas need to spread. For an idea to spread, it must be easily understood. When it's easily understood, it becomes actionable. We wake up everyday to inspire people to do the things that inspire them. These tips and ideas from Simon Sinek are designed to help you speak and present your ideas in a way that will inspire others to join your movement or cause. Building something together is much better than doing it alone.

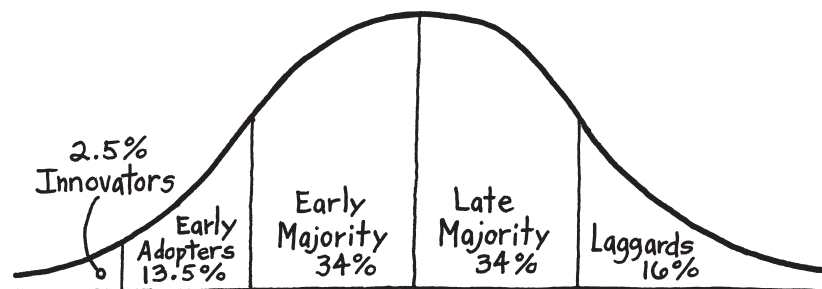
## Our Why

We wake up everyday to inspire people to do the things that inspire them so that together, we can change our world.

### 1. Speak to those who will listen

A clearly articulated cause quickly attracts supporters and repels skeptics. The goal is to speak to those that are attracted to our message, not to convince or 'sell' our ideas to the skeptics. When we attempt to convince others that we are right, we are taking a position to which they can take an opposing position. The best way to get traction for our ideas is to focus our time and attention on those who believe what we believe; to stand for something and invite others to come along of their own free will.

Simon often refers to the Law of Diffusion of Innovations and the bell curve that illustrates it. The Innovators and Early Adopters are where we want to focus our energy. They are the ones who are eager to be a part of something that represents who they are and what they believe.



The majority is more skeptical and less willing to accept ideas until someone else has tried it first. Focus on the left of the bell curve for support. Yes, we need the majority on our side if we wish to change the world, but it's the Innovators and Early Adopters that inspire them to do it.

Rather than trying to get in front of the biggest crowds and challenging the doubters, speak where you are invited to speak, where people are open to your ideas and want what you have to share. If you're always beating your head against a wall, you'll burn yourself out and your ideas won't spread. Start with those who believe what you believe so they can stand by your side and beat the drum along with you.

## 2. Show up to give

When you make a presentation or give a talk, what's your perspective? Is the audience in service of you or are you in service to them? When we show up with no other motive than to give of ourselves so that others may benefit, we come across in a very different way. The audience can actually feel it.

On the other hand when we agree to speak only for the money or in hopes that we'll make connections that can benefit us in the future or to impress our superiors in hopes of a promotion, we won't be as effective in inspiring others.

That's not to say that financial compensation, connections, promotions and other benefits don't have value. They absolutely do. However, they are simply byproducts of the service we give, not the reason we show up.

## 3. Start with the end in mind

This relates directly to the concept of starting with *Why*. Before you start down the road, know your destination. How do you want people to feel when they leave your presentation? What do you want them to be inspired to do with the ideas you've shared? What's the one idea you want to make sure sinks in?

When you start with the end in mind, it allows you to tailor every story you tell and every thought you share toward that destination. You may even find it useful to plan your presentation in

## Consider this

The greatest fulfillment can be found in giving of ourselves so that others may benefit.

While money, exposure, connections or other factors can help us do more of what we love, we'll feel truly successful when our primary objective is to give.

Other benefits are nice little extras, not the reasons for accepting the invitation to begin with.

reverse. Rather than planning what you want to say first, think about the statement you want to end with; the idea that encapsulates the entire presentation. Then figure out what will need to come before that in order to get you there.

When presenting new material, some speakers, including Simon, will walk on stage with nothing more than the destination in mind. They'll tell stories and share experiences that all relate to and strengthen the idea they are sharing. That ability comes with experience and practice. In the meantime, even if you have a prepared talk, you can still start with the end in mind.

#### 4. Own the room

For the time you're in the front of the room, the space belongs to you. When you're in front of a group that's willing to listen and you've shown up to give, owning the room feels fulfilling because you've set the stage for your idea to inspire others.

Here are a couple of ideas to help you own the room:

##### a. Walk

When you're introduced and it's time to make your way to the stage or the front of the room, all eyes are on you, even before you begin to speak. If you appear nervous or anxious, you will have spoken volumes before the first word comes out of your mouth. A great way to communicate a level of comfort with the room is to walk to the stage. Even if you're in the very back of a large room, walk to the front. Don't jog, don't run, walk. This can help establish the presence you need to inspire the audience with your message.

##### b. Pause before you speak

If you watch most speakers, they begin to speak as they're still walking onto the stage. One of the best ways to get your audience's attention from the beginning of your presentation is to pause before you speak. Take the room in for a moment. Make eye contact with a couple of

### Consider this

Giving a talk is like going on a road trip. Just like you wouldn't get in your car and just drive for hours without a destination in mind, you probably wouldn't get on stage and speak for an hour without heading toward a point or idea.

Whether you plan the route exactly or decide to head in the direction of your destination and see where the road in between goes, where you want to end up is always clear.

people in the audience. This might feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but it's an effective way to connect with others at a very human level. You may even find that once you're connected to the audience, there may be a more powerful way to begin than what you had planned.

### c. Move

The way you move on stage has the power to enhance your message. Great speakers have a natural flow on stage. Their gestures are fluid and smooth. They naturally move within the space they're given. The way Simon learned to fill the space was to take a ballet class. Ballet is all about presence and space and is a great way to become conscious of how your body moves and how your muscles relate to one another. No need to learn pirouettes or how to dance to music. Just the basics will do.

## 5. Speak on things you know and care about

Have you ever noticed how passionately parents speak about their kids? It's not because they're great speakers, it's because they care so much about their kids! When you speak about what you love or what you are passionate about, the audience will feel your energy.

Stick to speaking only about things you understand. We can't be an expert in everything and too often, we are made to feel like we need to be. If we truly show up to give, we'll give the best of what we have and be honest about what we don't have to give. Admitting what we don't know actually helps people trust us even more when we talk about what we do know.

When we try to be an expert about something we don't know much about, we can be perceived as inauthentic and the impact of the rest of our message can suffer. If you've been invited to speak or present an idea, it's because the audience is interested in you and your ideas. Speak about what you know and more importantly what you really care about. When you do, you'll naturally speak with more passion and energy and you're more likely to inspire others.

### Consider this

If you're not comfortable with a ballet class, consider an acting class. While the concepts you learn won't be exactly the same, acting classes can also help you become conscious of your presence on stage.

### Consider this

Speak confidently about what you know and be careful not to say too much about what you don't know.

Speakers and presenters often get requests to tailor their presentations to a specific industry or company.

If you choose to accept those requests, don't expect yourself to become an expert in that industry and more importantly, let people know you're not. Inoculate against any expectation of expertise by saying something like, "I'm not an expert in your field, but as I've done a little research, here's what I've noticed."

## 6. Go slow

It's easy to speak too fast, but it's nearly impossible to speak too slowly. How do you feel when you hear a highly-experienced newscaster speak? It's likely that you find them more credible because they are confident and not trying to prove anything. They are just sharing what they know. You may even find that you hang on their every word.

Those with more experience (sometimes this experience comes with age) often speak more slowly and with more thought behind what they say. When you speak slowly, it suggests wisdom. Speaking slowly doesn't suggest that you are less passionate about your topic. It actually ensures that those who are listening to you will understand what you're talking about.

One of the best ways to get comfortable with going slow is to record yourself. It's important to hear yourself as others hear you, not just as you hear yourself. As you listen to the recording, notice the following:

- Your pace - Will someone listening to you for the first time catch everything you say?
- Your emphasis - Often, the best way to make a point is to emphasize words as you slow your pace.
- Your pauses - Are you giving enough time for powerful thoughts or ideas to sink in before you move on?
- Your volume - What happens as you slow your pace? Do you find the volume of your voice going up or down?

## 7. Speak to one person at a time

Most people don't know that Simon is an introvert that doesn't like large crowds. So how does he manage to speak so comfortably in front of audiences of hundreds or thousands?

He speaks to one person at a time. Rather than panning the room as he speaks, he makes eye contact with one person and delivers an entire sentence or thought to that person. Then, he

### Consider this

Speaking slowly allows your ideas to carry more weight and meaning and gives your audience more time to internalize your message.

chooses another pair of eyes to connect with and delivers his next thought. Essentially, he's having a series of one-on-one conversations.

This takes practice and is another great way to connect with your audience. You may find that there are some members of your audience who are 'prisoners'. They have their arms crossed and they just don't want to be there. Don't focus your attention on these people or try to convince them to get on board with your message. You'll feel much more relaxed and comfortable if you speak to the individuals who are engaged, nodding their heads or smiling as you speak. Allow their energy to inspire you and in turn, you'll inspire more of them; perhaps even a prisoner or two as well.

## 8. Keep it human

You are the exact same person on stage as you are off stage. Those who are authentic speak and act consistently regardless of where they are. Rather than being worried about who people think you should be, be who you really are. When you show up to give, your audience will be rooting for you. They will want you to succeed, even if you happen to make a mistake. On the other hand, when you attempt to present yourself in a way that doesn't reflect who you really are, your audience will sense it, will trust you less, and be much less forgiving.

Click [here](#) to listen to an experience Simon shared with our team about keeping it human.

## 9. If you get lost, go quiet

Some speakers, including Simon, rarely use notes. Many of them feel it's very freeing not to use notes and accept that in doing so that they may lose their place from time to time. Losing your train of thought on stage can be scary, but it doesn't have to turn into an embarrassing experience. Remember the audience knows what you tell them through verbal and non verbal communication. The audience only knows you're lost if you tell them you are!

## Consider this

You'll find three types of audience members:

1 - The prisoner. This person doesn't want to be there. They are not there by choice and they want to leave.

2 - The tourist. This person is along for the ride and though they may take a few snapshots along the way, they are easily distracted and engagement could go either way.

3 - The partner. This person is eager to hear what you have to say. They have a notebook or device at the ready to jot down notes and ideas. They are engaged and on the edge of their seats.

Make eye contact with the partners. You'll find your own confidence and energy increase as you focus your attention on those who are focused on you.

## Tips

- a. If you get lost, go quiet. Try to avoid 'um'. A little silence is OK. Much like going slow, it helps your points sink in.
- b. Take a drink of water. Most of the time you'll have a bottle of water nearby. Taking a quick break to wet your whistle is perfectly acceptable and can provide some extra time for you to find your place.
- c. If you draw a complete blank and you've already paused, taken a drink and allowed for some silence and you're still hopelessly lost, do what Simon did in idea #8. Address your humanness. Remember, when you're speaking to those who will listen and you've shown up to give, you're in front of an audience that wants you to succeed. If worst comes to worst, they'll help you.

## 10. Enjoy it

When you're having fun, you'll inspire more people. Be grateful for the opportunity to share your ideas and revel in the moment! For some of us that's easier said than done. Often, we allow our nervousness to get in the way of the enjoyment of presenting our ideas.

Think about this: The symptoms for nervousness (sweaty palms, butterflies, increased heart rate) are the exact same symptoms as excitement. We choose to interpret those cues as nervousness or excitement. So why not make a choice; when you feel those symptoms, think 'This is exciting!' rather than thinking 'I'm so nervous!'

## 11. Accept the applause

The applause you receive after a presentation is a gift. Accept it gratefully! Often, speakers dismiss applause, try to downplay it or simply walk off stage. Applause serves a couple of important functions:

## Consider this

Those who achieve great things choose excitement over nervousness.

During the 2012 Summer Olympics, reporters would often interview athletes after their main events. When asked if they were nervous before their performance, without fail, the Olympians responded, 'I was really excited!'

We can choose the same response as well.



1. It's a way to measure the impact of your message. The type of applause tells you how your message was received. It's valuable information!

2. It's the audience's way of expressing appreciation for the value you brought them. To reject that appreciation is like rejecting a gift. While your natural inclination may be to walk off stage, grab your water bottle or otherwise shy away from the applause, stay where you are, look individuals in the eye and say 'thank you'.

### Consider this

Most of us are taught to reject compliments as a sign of humility.

We tend to say things like 'Oh, it was no big deal' or 'Anyone else could do the same thing'.

A compliment is a gift. Accept it by responding with a sincere 'Thank you.'

### Consider this

A standing ovation is not necessarily the greatest type of applause. Sometimes, when you've really inspired an audience, you may find that their applause may be longer and slower because they need time to process the power of your message.

**Ideas alone don't change our world for the better. Ideas that inspire action do.**

**When we share the ideas that inspire us in a way that inspires others to take action, we can build the world we imagine.**

We'd love to hear your feedback about these tips and stories about talks and presentations you gave that inspired action. Tell us your story at [inspireme@startwithwhy.com](mailto:inspireme@startwithwhy.com).