

THE SECRET INGREDIENT

There are many skills and talents that combine to create a great communicator, but what is the secret ingredient? Self-control. That's right: self-control makes you versatile and when we have a strong sense of self-control we know who we are. We are self-aware.

Here are 5 tips that will help you exercise self-control as a public speaker:

- #1: Know your strengths and manage your weaknesses.** Don't be too sensitive about it, either! Learn to be objective about who you are, and what you can offer to the world as a communicator.
- #2: Read the room and be versatile enough to adjust your tone.** We all want things to go smoothly, but sometimes, they don't! Roll with the punches. A strong sense of self-control makes it possible for you to pivot with ease.
- #3: Edit as you go.** You may have crafted the perfect speech, but the person before you went long, and now your 20 minutes have turned into 12. That means you need to edit as you go, skipping past parts of your narrative or your slides that are expendable.
- #4: Understand the power of the pause.** Pausing at the perfect moment in a speech or a presentation is an art. When we pause, the listener leans in to see what we are going to say next. Pausing for effect is a skill actors integrate into their training. Pausing is a measure of self-control.
- #5 Know when it's time to stop.** Sometimes self-control means you've just got to stop talking: you may want to keep on going, but your time is up. Find the exit ramp in your speech and take it. Stop talking and wrap it up gracefully.

If you can learn to practice self-control, if you can be objective about your own strengths and weaknesses, you will harness the secret ingredient to being an exceptional communicator. And by the way, self-control is a great life skill to practice, don't you think?

No matter how you sound, I can make you sound better.