Positivity…

Something I learned a while ago from some people who helped re-shape my thinking…

Concentrating on what you can’t do will only send you into a downward spiral. By concentrating on what you can do, you can begin building self-esteem, confidence and courage. Even if you’re already a confident person, a little more never hurt anyone.

NB If you’ve spent a lifetime focusing on what you can’t do, then the above may be a tough ask, but well worth the struggle.

PS: There’s a prize for the reader who finds the most mistakes contained within!
I’m on the warpath…

Against slit your throat, dryasabone, sleep inducing presentations… Who’s coming with me?

We’ve all sat through them I guess… hell, we may have even delivered one or two ourselves; “Hands up the guilty parties?”

This workbook is going to help you become a conversational genius… for in the land of the boring, the conscious communicator is a god.

I’ve been crafting and delivering coaching sessions now for several years and have helped hundreds of people become more courageous and ‘conscious’ of personal style.

Because, like it or not, it’s your style, your energy, and your passion that audiences will judge you by as a communicator… your content usually runs a poor 4th place.

By the end of this workshop I’d like you to consciously take just a couple of ideas and put them into practice ASAP or they’ll wither and die… and more importantly you won’t develop.

Think of this like a Tarantino movie, where each scene can be either an entire meal, or just another course on the way to some kind of resolution…

Sometimes you have to eat your jelly and ice cream first to wake you up!
First things first…

Never ever ‘do’ a presentation; instead you should ‘be’ the presentation. If you can’t ‘be’ the presentation yet, then together we’ll find a way…

This is a working document, not a book, so: my advice is not to read it like a book, with a book mindset.

You’ll get the best out of this short instructional, by setting aside 30 mins every now and again and treating it like I’m there in the room with you, with my bald head, blue eyes, and a spreading midriff, (most over 50’s know what I mean) keeping you Awake, Engaged and Informed… in that order

(More on that later)
Nano Tip

Everyone is different… no big surprise there then.

So it stands to reason that everyone behaves differently in different situations. The presentation situation is no… different!

Check this out… however much you may like there to be… there is no ‘one’ way to ‘present’… there’s only your way.

The style you find that’s OK for you; making you feel anything from simply OK to ecstatic, or in the zone, or any other state of grace you may wish to use to describe your state of mind… “That’s the way to do it.”

Very few people are ‘unable’ to present, but many are fearful of being judged… heck; that applies to life too!

Stop letting life happen to you and instead why don’t you start happening to life!!

What you’re about to ‘experience’ as you is how ‘you’ can find your way to keep people awake, engaged and informed… in that order.
An Apple for the teacher?

Steve Jobs

Click the link…

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQ2CMMdowu0

Had a lot to live up to didn’t he?

After all he was held up as one of the world’s most effective presenters.

But in a way it was ‘OK’ for him and Richard (I’ve got a jumbo) Branson et al; they have production budgets, lighting, innovative products, and in Branson’s case… a bloody great hot air balloon… and even a space-plane in the offing.
Don’t get me wrong, they were and are probably **great guys.**

But what about you?

What about your weekly team meetings, your ‘**bringing people up to speed**’ meetings, your induction presentations and a multitude of everyday presentations you might make during a regular month to people who **frankly; don’t want to be there.**

It’s fine for Apple with its paper thin **ITopLapPodpad** that washes the windows, makes the coffee and predicts next year’s new black; but how about you with your potentially dreary figures update, or Q2 sales targets, and **God forbid…** your ‘**Annual Kick-Off motivating the troops presentations!!**

This collection of ideas is for those of you who don’t have the luxury of 3 months rehearsal and a production budget to make a small Hollywood movie.

This book is really for those of everyday **presentation soldiers** out there who just want a little help to go from ‘get by’ to good, good to great, or **great to fantastic** in the everyday arenas in which they work.

By **consciously** putting in place some simple ideas and insights; you’ll realize mega results.

I’ve peppered this with ‘**nano-tips**’ to facilitate that premise, so you not only receive an intellectual idea, but also ‘**feel**’ several experiences as well.
To get the best from it you’ll need to engage with the exercises and take as much time as you need to embed the experiences on offer.

I’m not much interested in your intellectual understanding of your content anyway; that’s your job… to know what you’re talking about.

What I’m passionate about is you connecting and feeling the emotions on offer about HOW you talk about what you want to communicate.

If you ever thought presentations were about content, then you’re about to be disappointed. Absolutely, there must be content and it must make sense, that’s a no-brainer. But unless you can keep your audience awake and engaged, your content will run in last place.

All of our work is about Awake & Engaged… so more of that in session 2.

For now, I’d like you to list all the ways you consciously keep your audiences awake and engaged.

How do you do it?

Do you do it?
Is there anyone out there?

Now to some simple Logistics…

By which I mean, what you will need to get the most out of the time you spend with me…

A video camera
A mirror
Commitment
Time,
Energy

…the courage to evolve!

If any of those words are too ‘touchy-feely’ for you, choose your own.

And so it begins…
“An effective presentation could be seen a series of mistakes, well recovered from”.

A lesson I learned from a past colleague never to be forgotten.

We’ll all make mistakes in presentations, golf, marital disputes, parking the car, ordering wine and a million other activities. That we make mistakes is not the issue; but it’s the quality of our recovery that makes us more effective and empathetic human beings.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THIS STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS SIMPLE...

I wrote this so you can work out the ANSWERS FOR YOURSELF.

The ratio of answers to questions in the following content is very low… purposely.
I wrote it in response to all the **heavyweight** tomes I’ve seen on bookstore shelves… some of which I’ve even read… or more truthfully, scanned the first few pages or sleeve notes.

Actually a couple of them were **really useful**, but too long and winding roadish for me.

I’ve written it **SHORT and TO THE POINT**, because I _get bored_ quickly…

But if you’re hoping for **a row** of these, you’ll be disappointed …

There’s **no index**… because this isn’t a book.

(Yes I know you shouldn’t start a sentence with ‘Because”. **But**, if that bothers you, you should put this down right now, because there’s a lot worse to come, as exemplified by my use of the _word_ at the beginning of this sentence…

it’s just a rule… so; if you can, **get over it**.

If you want to find a part to re-read, you’ll have to work a little to rediscover it. It also repeats itself in places… because some things just don’t go in the first time.

I’ve produced this with a couple of conflicting goals in mind…
1. To offer simple, easy to apply insights and tools to help in your challenge to keep audiences awake and engaged.

2. To make you work harder than you’d expect from reading an ‘instructional’.

I said a couple of things, I meant three…

3. To encourage you put the effort in, to get the best out of this collection of words, or else the time you spend reading will be wasted… so if you’re looking for an easy ride; hit delete it now and move on.

Now;
Take just a couple (now I really do mean a couple) of Nano tips from these pages and we’ll both be happy!

Have you noticed anything about how you’re feeling so far?

Make a short list of words describing what you think is happening?

Become self-aware, and avoid being self-absorbed.
Next session: Pandora’s 4 dimensional box!

Session 3

Pandora’s 4 Dimensional Box...

To appreciate what it takes to be a **black-belt** communicator, whether 1-2-1 or 1-2-many you have to understand the dynamics of communication... AKA how it all works!

I’m going to challenge you to join the following dots, and to work out how best to use the information I’m about to share with you...

There are 4 channels of human expression we use to communicate our values, ideas, beliefs and experience and they are:

- **Physical**... what are you doing?
- **Emotional**... what are you feeling and how are you making others feel?
- **Intellectual**... How are you thinking?
- **Intentional**... why are you doing, feeling and/or thinking a particular way?

So ask yourself these simple questions; and then begin to answer them as best you can...

- How are you communicating physically?
• How are you communicating emotionally?

• How are you communicating intellectually?

• How are you communicating your intention?

These are the four pillars upon which all human-to-human communication is founded. Once you’ve learned to consciously integrate them… the world’s your lobster!!

The physical dimension… What are you doing?

How are you impacting on the world physically? The fundamental POV of any human on another is to firstly identify gender, then the facial and physical gesture, then posture, and pace to determine whether they’re in the presence of friend or foe…. Because when all is said and done, even though mankind has put a man on the moon; we’re just extremely clever apes with the drives and instincts emanating from our primal brain stem.
The emotional dimension... What are you feeling and how are you making others feel?

Feelings last a lot longer than words; so making others feel something about your message is key **if you want them to remember anything you said.**

It’s also as important to register how others are making you feel, so you can be conscious of whether you’re being hi-jacked by the emanating emotions of the individual or group **you’re communicating with...**
Knowledge is obviously a bonus if you’re delivering any kind of message... it mostly helps to know what you’re talking about at some level. However: it’s also crucial to know your default thinking style. Are you a big picture thinker or more inclined to the detail, a nuts and bolts thinker? In addition, it’s crucial you are able to identify the thinking style of the individual or audience you’re talking to so you can deliver the information in the style they’re most likely to retain it.

And finally...
The Intentional Dimension... Or the WHY?

Your ability to **consciously choose an intention** as to how or what you want your audience to think, do or feel is again crucial to being unambiguous, clear and concise with your message. If you **mentally set** your intention then the former three dimensions of physical, emotional and intellectual should fall into place and for the most part take care of themselves. A strong intention will set the body
language, voice, eye contact etc. It will frame your emotional state and finally, help you disseminate the information in words and a style best fitted to the individual or audience before you/

Next session: There’s a gap you should know about…

Session 3

The Gap, Chasm or Great Divide… you choose

However; even before you begin to get your head around the four pillars I’ve just mentioned; there’s a much more fundamental concept to understand…

There’s a.......... gap............. that exists between how you ‘see’ yourself and how others ‘see’ you. In the discovery and acceptance of that gap lays the rough diamond waiting be mined, cut and polished to set you head and shoulders above others not yet acquainted with their gap/s.

The gap, for simplicity’s sake, can occur in any or all of the previous pillars I mentioned, physically, emotionally, intellectually and/or intentionally.
When there’s incongruence between ‘what’ you say and ‘how’ you say it, your fellow human beings will primarily focus on your body’s language, not your verbal language. Therefore; when studying this particular aspect, ask yourself, “Is your ‘body’ in line your message?”

Now your audience has got the first 25% of the message, the physical, they’ll be sensing how you make them feel emotionally about you, about the message, and what you want them to think, feel or do about that message.

So that’s 50% of the message and you’ve only been standing up to deliver it for 10 to 20 secs.

Now their clever new bit of the brain, the bit at the front, kicks in and begins to identify for them how you think. Are you about the big picture or are you about the nuts and bolts?

You’re now still only a few minutes only into the message and 75% complete. Finally; if you’re integrated across all four dimensions the final 25% of the ‘message’ should be absolutely clear…

Not the ‘what’ or even the ‘how’ of your message, but the ‘why’ of your message… What’s driving this person, what gets them excited, what’s the itch they scratch every day that inflames them to ‘be’?

People don’t buy what you do, say, think or feel; they buy why you do, say, think or feel it.
Like I said; “Once you understand all that about yourself, then you’ll stand some chance of beginning to keep people awake, engaged and informed… in that order!”

Awake!

Engaged!!

Informed!!!

Next session: Ready – Aim - FIRE!
Rhetoric and Aristotle’s discovery...

The science of communication… It might as well have begun here; or there, about 3000 years ago

A long time ago, a clever guy name of Aristotle, had a thought. It was one of many, but this one concerned the art of rhetoric.
He reckoned on **three targets** you had to hit to give yourself the best chance to influence or **persuade** an individual or group of your argument.

*(If I’ve misquoted him, then I claim first **dibs** on the following idea)*

**Knowledge**

Or content…
Values

Or your drivers
Firstly… most of you in business have already got the knowledge part of the triumbarate sorted. In the first instance it’s probably how you got your job… by knowing ‘stuff’ or proving that you can learn ‘stuff’. Processes, rules, problem solving, compliance, which bits to chop out if you’re a surgeon, or which bits to leave in if you’re a gardener, etc, etc.

Secondly… many of you will be familiar with the corporate penchant for the creation and obvious reception wall-display of company values, and the way they expect you to ‘live the brand’… even though the board may not seem to… but
that’s another story… maybe the follow up… I’ll speak to my publisher.

‘Back to living the brand’…
Frankly, when I hear that phrase… I want to

runscreeeeeeeaming

from

where I might be, mewling and puking!.. But that’s my issue.

If you know what I’m talking about, say aye!

Some of you will even have attended workshops during
which you might have been asked to list and discuss your
own values and compare them with those of the companies
you work for. (By the way do you work with or for your
organisation... and why might that denote a different relationship
dynamic for you?)
Let’s hope you found at least a couple of shared values, otherwise you may be in for a…

Rough ride
However; thirdly and based on my work over the past several years and my adult life experience over the past several decades, I’m betting that not many of you, or your businesses, have paid an awful lot of attention to the last of the three targets

... Emotion

That part of the human condition is messy, unpredictable, potentially explosive or implosive, and frankly, something you might feel like steering away from...

especially at work.

But here’s the challenge... If you want to engage and inspire your audience that’s exactly the target I suggest you to aim at first.

People will forget your words as quickly as ice turns to vapor on a hotplate...

However, they’ll find it harder to forget the way you made them feel.
Read the instructions, then…

Go back to a happy childhood memory… a birthday, a Christmas, or a holiday. Now close your eyes and remember where you were; was it inside or outside, warm or cold, day or night?

Who else was there?

Can you remember how it smelled?

Can you remember what you or they were saying?

Now… with your eyes open… can you remember/recall how you felt? My hope is you that can. And if you can, I’m betting that feeling you’re ‘re-feeling’ comes from at least 10 or more years ago.

So; my point is that yes of course logos, or ‘content’ for the intellect is vital for a presentation. But beware that it’s the only thing you focus on when creating, refining and delivering it.
And in addition, you’d better pay attention, or be aware as you can be of what this particular audience wants from you in the moment.

But, in my opinion, that most importantly you consciously decide how you want your audience to feel about your message, and set about achieving that aim by putting your attention on your intention.

Session 5

Attention
On
Intention

Put a word in your head and let it inform the way you deliver your message.

Here’s how…
Impressions...

Are formed in a matter of seconds, (it’s all connected to our primal brain physiology – check out Wikipedia if you’re interested) and from then on you’re either struggling to get back to zero or flying high... there’s no middle ground, but the choice is yours...

Here’s how you can consciously create the-impact you choose...
Make a list single words that describe a positive first impression and then a list of negative impressions...

Here’s a couple to start you off…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Unprepared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cont…

End of list…

Set up your video camera…

Now introduce yourself simply in just a line or two at most to camera. Before you do, put one of the words in your head and allow it inform the way you deliver your message. There’s no ideal to live up to here; only your interpretation of the
word through the **behaviour you consciously display.**

You are never the best judge of how others see you so let someone you **trust** look at the video and feedback which qualities they see you display. If they see something other than you think they should see then that’s **great information** for you too.

If they see what you thought they’d see, then well done. If they didn’t see what you thought they’d see then well done again. **It’s all valuable feedback for you.** It’s identifying any gaps that exist between your self perception, and the perception of others.

You’ll find that a simple word in your head will affect you in many ways… vocally, physically, emotionally; your gestures will be affected, even your eye contact and posture; the pace at which you speak and even your volume. **It’s a fantastic tool** so like ‘they’ say, **practice** if you want to get to Carnegie Hall.

The sobering fact is… **the world sees you** through **it’s own lens**, it’s POV, experience, culture, prejudices, etc. You need to know how you are perceived from the **outside in** if you want to be more effective from the **inside out**.
Beware... an audience can only take so much ‘telling’... unless you happen to be Billy Connolly, (or any brilliant comedian from your part of the world).

How long do you think your audience will be taking in what you’re saying if you go into ‘tell mode’?

My suggestion is, even if you’re energised, self-aware, controversial or funny, about 90 secs maximum... even if you employ every ounce of the story-teller’s skill you currently might have as a ‘civilian’.
After that length of time, even if it looks like the light’s on, more often than not... **there’s no one at home in the audience.**

If you’re lucky, they might be still aware you exist as some kind of **hazy, noise-generating blur** somewhere in front of them. Although in most cases they’re thinking about ...what?

Make a list of all the things you start thinking about when you’ve **disengaged** with someone else’s presentation...

If you want to be effective, you need to get into their heads and remind yourself of their Point Of View (POV)

**List...**

The work piling up at the office is a good place to start.

What to buy your partner for their birthday next week, etc

If you can think it... so can they... over to you...

**List cont...**
In the next session we’ll look at how a killer structure will help you deliver with clarity, emphasis and impact!
First things second...

Structure

Where do you start when creating a message?

Here’s an option for you...

What is it you want to say? What’s the point of gathering all those people into one space at one time, sitting them down in uncomfortable chairs and having them listen to you?

What do you want to say?
If you can’t boil the message down into 30 seconds or so, then I suggest you don’t know. Re-think and create a 30 second version of your key message.

I think that thought was one of Einstein’s pearls of wisdom, so I won’t be claiming that one myself.

Once you do know what your key message is, then here’s a way to structure your ‘conversation’ so you can keep ‘em awake and engaged while you’re telling it like it is...

Here’s a mnemonic for you Ant style...

A.W.A.K.E.

A: Attention…
  Wake ‘em up! Do something surprising! Scare yourself a little! There’ll be no sleeping at the back while you’re up front

W: Wellevent… I have a lisp
  Be relevant, be specific! Tell ‘em how what you’re saying relates to them. Give them a reason to sit and listen to you!
A: Announcement…
Meat and potatoes! Now you’ve fed them the appetizer, give ‘em the main course announcement or message.

K: Killer Example
Now give them gravy to wash down the main course. Tell them a story of how your message relates in the real world.

E: Energise Them…
Tell ‘em what you want them to do, think and/or feel. Energise them specifically. Don’t leave it up to them to interpret your message. No matter how clear you think you’ve been, if you’re not specific, there will be as many interpretations as there are people in your audience.

“You can use this structure simply for the intro.

However; you can also use it to structure the whole show!”
Next session… See, Hear
Feel

Next bit…

Visual Auditory Kinesthetic

Your audience will consist of people… hopefully… with a mixture of preferences as to how they best drink in your message.
Visual…

Some people absorb images through their eyes. These can be actual or imaginary (triggered by your words IE “Imagine if…”)

Auditory…

Others prefer to absorb what you say through their ears

Kinesthetic…

Others prefer physical or ‘hands on’ input… so get them to touch or do something.

Nano Tip…

To discover your own preference, listen to the words you use when asking for clarification of something and/or the words you use to acknowledge understanding.

IE  “I see what you mean”
    “I hear what you say”
    “That feels right to me”

Hurdle 1: Remember, if you’re not conscious of your own preference you may fall into the trap of creating a presentation from your own VAK position.

Hurdle 2: Remember, your audience will consist of a mixture of all three VAK positions.

And so… remember to create a presentation touching all three to ensure you keep the majority awake and engaged, so you can get your information into them, so they might retain some of it, resulting in a job well done by you!
By the way; I hate the word ‘presentation’.

Here’s why…
Two sentences…

NB Neither sentence is right of wrong, since communication is a matter of cause and effect. So long as the cause is consciously created… go right ahead.

**Example 1**

“Tomorrow I’d like you to make a presentation to Bill and Ted about the project’s progress”.

Think about how that makes you feel for a moment…

**Example 2**

Tomorrow morning I’d like you to have a *conversation* with Bill and Ted how the project’s going?.

Now think about how those instructions makes you feel…

Content wise, they both require the same information as an answer don’t they? So what’s the difference; which one would you prefer to be asked to do and why?

Write your thoughts below…

**Go on… write them down, don’t say to yourself I’ll do it later… you won’t… get a pencil and**
write down your thoughts…
now…

Ends
For some; the difference might appear subtle, yet for me it’s as wide as the Grand Canyon. Where do you want to be in your head, heart and guts when having to ‘present’?

In a place of anything from reticence to abject terror; or in a place of expectation and confidence?

I know what the word ‘presentation’ does, or used to do, to me, and I know where the word ‘conversation’ takes me… somewhere non judgmental, somewhere where I feel on an equal footing… somewhere I like being, somewhere I might even ask a question!
Next session...

A matter of confidence

Session 9

What do you need?

What about you; what are your challenges when you ‘present’?

Make a list here… In my experience confidence usually goes at the top, but be my guest…

Now go make a cup of something and seriously think about what your specific goal is, based on your personal challenges as a presenter…
Make it simple… Here’s a tip

Injecting confidence into yourself…

Where in your life are you confident?

It might be leading a sports team onto the field, or playing chess, on the toilet, or even wiring a plug… frankly it doesn’t matter. I need you to visualize those moments and identify the qualities you display when in your specific confident situation. Write down those qualities and behaviours here and refer to them every now and then as a battery charger.

IE Telling yourself to be more confident… not “less nervous” is, psychologically, a better instruction.

Being ‘less’ of something is already a negative POV; so let’s maybe start with…

To be more… something…

Next session: Getting focused, so no one sleeps at the back!
Now; think back to a presentation that didn’t send you to sleep…

Can you identify why?

Write down a few thoughts about which aspects/dynamics contributed to you not becoming catatonic and snoring your head off…

Maybe a spellling mistak on a slide?
Seeing...

For those of us who have to ‘Present’, our job is not just to ‘feel’ something about a presentation we witness. Our mission is to consciously identify what was it that made us feel anything at all, and use it for ourselves!

If you’d like to practice this skill, the skill of dissecting a speech and working out why it was the way it was, you should log on to www.tedtalks.com

You’ll find hundreds of presentations on the site, all given by top people in the fields of Technology, Entertainment and Design.

The content is mostly brilliant, but the delivery, although absolutely brilliant from some, Sir Ken Robinson, and Malcolm Gladwell for
my money, and not so hot from others... who shall remain nameless... **you decide.**

If you don’t want to read the whole way through, you can stop after you’ve taken on board these few insights...

**N R G!**

Find a way to **energise, and re-energise** yourself... it’s a show. Maybe a show with a small ‘s’, but it’s a show nonetheless.

Actors are trained to use a variety of energising methods including physical exercise, listening to music to set an internal mood, looking at a photograph, reading a poem, or short piece from a book, the repeated use of a **physical gesture** in order to create an emotion – (clenched fist into palm of hand for instance)

Don’t get all riled up and start thinking I’m trying to turn you into actors... that would take more time than you’ve got or energy I’m willing to invest. What I am suggesting is some of the skills of the actor are easily transferable to anyone receptive to the idea.

**If you think it’s all about PowerPoint, then boy we have a long journey ahead of us.**

**Next session: Conversation V Presentation**
Exercise

Conversation V Presentation

I’d like you to create a short definition of what you think a conversation is…

Now create a short definition, of what you believe a presentation is…

What’s the difference between the two?
Think about a presentation as a conversation… and take a moment...

Make a note of how this insight might affect the way in which you will approach your next ‘public communication’…

Next session: Questions, questions, questions…
By asking questions you’ll instinctively turn a ‘presentation’ into a ‘conversation’. Yes you’ll probably be doing most of the talking, but if you’re in the conversation mode, you’d more likely to keep your audience awake and engaged.

By the way, you’ll have to become adept at asking specific types of questions, so you stay in control, without the audience necessarily knowing.

Don’t forget to decide what you want your audience to feel about what you’re saying and put your ‘Attention On your Intention’. (AOI)

If you can achieve those 2 things, you’ll be on the right track.

Make a list here of as many ‘types’ of questions you can think of...

Closed
Open
Rhetorical… just to get you started
Questions, questions, questions

An exercise

1. Find a long-suffering friend
2. Sit opposite them and have a short conversation consisting solely of questions
3. Try not to go crazy and persist at it if you can.

If you can master the ability call up a particular ‘type’ of question at will, that’ll be an extra weapon in your armory.

I could give you list, but that a job for you…

Next session: Who Are You?
WHO ARE YOU?

A very good place to start...

FACT...

On the catwalk of life, personal or professional, you’re on show until you can lock your door and quietly go mad in the privacy of your own space.

When you stand to make your mark, deliver your keynote, or simply walk into a space where other people are… what do they see?

Take a video camera, stand before it and tell it a two-minute story about yourself. Keep recording, warts and all, until you’re finished. This is not supposed to be perfect… nothing ever is, this is supposed to be you, in the raw, being you in extraordinary circumstances.

When you’ve finished, take a look back at what you did… and see what ‘worked’ about the ‘character’ on the screen. I absolutely understand that 99.9% of you will immediately see all the many ‘faults’ in yourself, your performance, your attributes, crooked teeth, double chins, “do I really sound like that?” etc.

However here’s your first lesson in building self-confidence… you have to see what’s effective about yourself. Look long and hard and make a list of all the great things about you as a ‘communicator’.
Focusing on the stuff you feel is wrong will only shrink your ability to see what’s right about you. **Confidence** comes from having the **courage** to see you in a positive way.

Yes I appreciate that as children many of you had the confidence squeezed out of you, and you may not have been the first to be chosen for the sports teams etc.

But please; now’s the time to get over the voices in your head telling you you’re crap… or at least lacking in some way. If you listen to those voices, you’ll fade away.

You need to listen out for, or even begin generating voices saying you’re not that bad really, then “You’re actually quite good at that…” and on up to “I’m excellent, bring it on, what’s next?”

I’m a big believer in faking it, till you make it. All you need is **courage!** and the presence of mind to be positively self-delusional.

**…and that’s what I’m here for.**

When you look at the video, start by asking yourself, what kind of a person is this? Approachable, serious, warm, trustworthy, professional, knowledgeable etc.

See yourself from an **audience perspective.**

Make your list of qualities and behaviours here…

You can add to it as you progress through the work… or not, it’s up to you.
List cont...

Now search the Internet for any you’ve missed and add them here…

Next session: What works about me?
“How am I effective?”

A useful word to keep in mind… ‘HOST’

Write a list of all the qualities and behaviours of a host…

‘Welcoming’ might be a good place to start
Now circle three of those qualities that on a good day, you display when you act as a host...

...slightly weird bit.

Pick one of your self confessed qualities, set up your video camera, and talk to it for up to roughly 60 seconds, about why that quality is important in you as a host. If you can, I’d like you to ‘hold’ that word in your head while to speak, and it allow it to inform the way you deliver your content.

The point of the exercise is to make it as simple as possible to hold an intention while delivering your message.

Remember

It’s not your words the audience will likely retain, but the way you made them feel. By holding the word host in your consciousness, you stand more chance of hitting them were they’ll feel it… the gut and the heart.

When you’ve finished, take a look and repeat the ‘what’s working about this character exercise’…. make another list… it can contain the same things as the last list, and if you can, add a couple more.

I told you this was a workbook didn’t I?

Self-awareness and self-knowledge are key ingredients in the recipe for building confidence. The more you can identify your effective traits, the more your confidence will evolve.

Now please take a few moments and reflect on why I asked you to do the last exercise... and make a list of your thoughts...
List cont...
Next session: Feelings

Session 14

Make ‘em feel something…

Don’t take it personally, but your audiences will forget what you say almost immediately in most cases, unless you do something very unique and unusual.

The audience may remember any images you show or create for them in their imagination for a while…

But the one thing they will hang on to for hours, days, weeks and maybe even years, will be how you made them feel.

Here’s a little self-disclosure for you. Back in the mid 70’s when I was in my 20’s, I went to Leicester Square in central London to see the first Superman movie with Christopher Reeve. I should have known better… however when I emerged from the cinema all those years ago I felt like I could fly! I was 20 years old!!

Even as I write this, and even though it’s a story I’ve told in coaching sessions for many years… I still remember with crystal clarity how that experience made me feel. It’s a feeling I still sometimes access if I need an extra confidence boost… that, and the time I made par at a 600 yard hole! But that’s a whole other ball game.
Nano Tip

Remember thinking back to a happy childhood memory?

That’s your most powerful weapon as a presenter, as a communicator, and POTENTIALLY AS A THOUGHT-LEADER… Making it possible, even easy, for people to feel something about you and / or your message is crucial if you want to be effective.
Nano Tip

Why might that exercise not only be a useful experience for you to undergo, but also for your audience?

Your thoughts here…
If your presentations are simply content… my recommendation is to send your audience an email and stop wasting everybody’s time. Just ask them to send any questions they may have, to ME@itsjustcontent.com

The basics continued…

Question?

What is the first and most important job of any presenter?

Write anything you think of below…
Here’s my feeling…

Your first and most important job is to keep people… AWAKE!

How do you think you can achieve that?

I’ll give you a clue; think about all the things that send you to sleep in a presentation and write down all the opposite behaviors.

(If you’re now thinking, “Those behaviours are inappropriate, not me or embarrassing… then you’re either way off my scale or simply deterred by the E word… ENERGY!)

Watch this guy to get a sense of how far you can go, yet still retain credibility… http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

Think about all the usual stuff like vocal delivery and body language… and then go wider. Think about how it looks, the set up and environment…

Write down your own ideas and thoughts, and then turn the page…
Next session:

Words are like bullets…

Session 15

...relatively harmless until fired.

If you imagine all the aspects that go to make up how we communicate with each other, on a daily basis, how important are the words?

75%, 50%, less… more?

The answer is that it depends on the circumstances in which you’re speaking.

However…
**Nano Tip**

You need to find a partner for this one…

- Sit opposite them and just speak a simplified version of your address to them.
- Use no emotion or inflection in your voice.
- Have them do the same to you.

Feedback on how difficult or easy it was to speak with no underlying intention. There’s no right or wrong here, just discover where you sit in the spectrum of ‘emotional language’.

Now we’ll add a little *fuel to the* fire step by step.

- Repeat the same exercise both ways, but this time, deliver the ‘address message’ focusing on speed of delivery, slowly/quickly. All slowly, all quickly and any variation you chose to play with.

Feedback on how, purely the speed of delivery, creates an effect in the listener.

Now you’re going to become self-aware of your own day-to-day default speed as experienced by your partner.

**Now most importantly**, ask your partner to feedback their view of your default speed on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 being dead slow, 10 being superfast) It’s important they feedback before you reveal your perception of your speed.

Once they’ve fed back… were their any surprises for either of you? Again, there’s no right or wrong… just cause and effect. Now you have some external idea of how your speed is perceived, you’re in a position to begin consciously creating the impact you choose!
IF YOU TAKE NOTHING ELSE FROM ANY OF THIS, PLEASE REMEMBER THE PART ABOUT BEING CONSCIOUS OF THE EFFECT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE.

That **awareness** is the difference between **average** communicators and **super communicators**.

Ok now repeat the whole exercise using the address lines, focusing solely on these three further aspects…

- **Volume**: loudness and softness, travelling between the two.

- **Modulation**: varying your pitch from low to high. (Yes it will all sound ridiculous, but trust me, there’s method in the madness!)

- **Pause**: The conscious use of the pause is one of the most powerful communication tools you’ll ever master. So again using the address lines, place pauses in there, to change to effect of the content.

**NB: The quality of your pause…**

The trick is to get comfortable with being in front of an audience and just being quiet for a few moments while maintaining eye contact. Not swallowing great gulps of air, shifting your weight from one foot to the other and looking anywhere but at the audience.

*Please trust me on this one; once you get the hang of it, you’re going to love the effect you achieve with the pauses, as much as with the words you speak.*

Ok nearly there now, one last piece in the puzzle for you!
That was an exercise; you couldn’t possible practically apply what you did to an everyday situation; so here’s a neat shortcut for you…

Facing each other again, I want you to repeat the address lines to each other, one person at a time as before, but this time I want you to imbue the **content** with an *‘intention’*. 

*Intention 1:*

**Intimidate** - the other person with your address. Put the word intimidate in your head, and deliver your address accordingly.

Once your partner’s done the same, try this…

*Intention 2:*

**Inspire/motivate** - the other person with your address… Follow the same instructions as above.

How important was the content of the message, IE your address?

Was it the content, or the way you delivered it that had an effect?

You’ll notice that the speed, volume, modulation, pauses, came into effect automatically. Your body language, which we’ve not even looked at yet, changed, your eye contact etc. All because you put your ATTENTION ON YOUR INTENTION, or (AOI).

The answer to how important are the words in any given message can be as low as zilch.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!
Next session: Dodging The Bullets…

Session 16

Dodging the Bullets

There’s a mental game I play when watching presenters having a difficult time, when they’ve been asked a question to which either they don’t know the answer, or they know the answer but for whatever reason, are not going to offer it.

The game’s called Dodging the Bullets, I count how many bullets were fired and how many times they physically dodged them.

Dodging the bullets is what average presenters do, taking the bullets and turning them into gifts is what extraordinary presenters do.
Dodgers display an unconscious human behaviour that you and I would, if we were in the same situation… it’s only human.

Being in control of the unconscious behaviour is the difference between being potentially hung out to dry, or looking like a confident God who just won the lottery… for the tenth time.

An exercise… something to do… at last

Get on the good foot!

Find a willing partner…

Stand facing each other with about one and half arms length distance between you both.

One character is A, the other is B

A asks B a question they can’t know the answer to;

“what’s my middle name?”

for example.

B says they’re sorry but they don’t know the answer, and as they do so, they take half a step backwards, then return to their original position

A gets a few seconds to check how the response and reaction made them feel about character B

Now A asks the same question, but this time as character B says they don’t know the answer, they take a small step forward and then
return to their original position. *(NB it’s important that in stepping forward you don’t encroach on A’s personal space, thereby causing discomfort or even a feeling of attack)*

Character A now gets a few moments again to check how the response and reaction made them feel about character B again.

Now the exercise is reversed so that B asks the questions and A answers them in the same way with the movements... a small step backwards, then a small step forwards.

Now the de-brief...

Have a chat about the differences you felt between a person who steps away from you and the way you felt about the person who stepped towards you.

Make any notes here...
My experience suggests that a character who steps away in such circumstances is perceived as unhelpful, unsure, and indeed seems to be ‘on the back foot’.

The person that steps forward, even though they still don’t know the answer, is perceived as friendly, communicative and indeed seems to be ‘on the front foot’.

Audiences generally don’t have a ‘conscious’ experience of the presenter dodging the bullet; they more usually just get a sense that something’s up.

Likewise when a presenter ‘takes the bullet’ they usually don’t say to themselves or each other ”Ah!, did you see that, they stepped backwards/ forwards”. They just get a sense; a gut feeling, about the quality of the character standing before them.

So the next time you’re aware of trying to dodge the bullet by stepping backwards, reverse the motion and ‘get on your good foot’ as James Brown has been known to say… or sing.

Next session: NRG is key…
NRG is key!

I
I
I
I
I
I

Here is an axis...

The vertical represents energy 0 to 10, and the horizontal represents time. Now, take a pen and, from the about 5.5 on the energy plane, draw a line representing your bog standard, fall asleep presentation. About the 2/3rds point along the timeline continue the line in a descending curve down off the bottom of the graph. Now that’s what a potentially crap presentation looks like.

Now, in a different colour pen, on the same graph, pick a point on the vertical around 9 and begin to draw psychotic squiggly horizontal time line going loop the loop, up and down, finishing way up, off the top of the graph.

Ok; now you have two graphic examples of the two presentation extremes you may have had to endure in your life... perhaps even given!
Usually the ideal line is somewhere between the two. You have to decide where your delivery default is, and adjust accordingly. Everything hinges on you knowing what your default position is. Self-awareness is a critical skill of any great communicator…

Self-awareness is a critical skill of any great communicator.

A ‘presentation/conversation’ is a living breathing dynamic… event…. Or at least should be. If you don’t make it so, why should an audience care about anything you have to say, or stay awake, stay engaged?

If you’re going to stand, or sit in front of people, wake them up and keep them engaged, then like it or not you’re going to have to create some ‘theatre’… and for theatre read ENERGY!

Delegates, teams, public audiences… hell! people, are like a super car’s carburetors; they’ll suck you dry without so much as a thank you.
Nano Tip

What’s your default energy? As you go through life, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 low and 10 high, where are you most of the time?

Give yourself a number, then ask a few people who know you how they see you, don’t tell them how you graded yourself, before they feed back. The fascinating part is discovering whether there are differences between how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you.

Now here’s a reminder of a sobering thought… “On the catwalk of life you’re always on show”.

Think about that statement for a few moments and write down what it means to you and your future potential everyday behaviors…
I work with a vast selection of people from a multitude of organisations. I can’t possibly know about the individual businesses, but what I do know is that whether your talking to scientists, hairdressers, council officers or IT engineers, they’re all just people. In the main they come with three preferences as to how they like their information…

That includes you too.

Small Idea... **BIG PAYOFF**

Next session: ROF... Revisiting Old Friends
You’ve seen this somewhere before

VAK

Some people prefer Visual stimulation, some Auditory and some Kinesthetic; or in ‘straight talk’ see, hear, feel.

In any audience you’re going to have a mixture, so in planning your content, you should definitely adapt the usual wordy slides with sound, images and, if possible, something for some or all of the audience to get their hands on.

Granted that last one’s not always easy or even possible, but if you start thinking about the audience and what they need, as opposed to solely concentrating on what you need, then many things become possible.

Which way are you inclined?

You preference will usually unconsciously dictate the style and delivery of your content.
Another bit

I prefer not to use the words presenter and presentation, unless I’m looking for a specific effect for the delivery of the content.

Nano Tip

HOST

Write down all the qualities and behaviors of a host you can think of...

Here’s one to kick you off… welcoming… over to you…

Yes you have done this before… repetition is key to remembering.

Nano Tip

List all the emotions that you can make someone feel, simply by adding a subtext to how you say it.

Here’s a starter for you…

Pressured...

Over to you
So it’s generally not what you say but how you say it that conveys the true message.

Now; simply **choose** one of those words, put it in your head and allow that word to inform the way you deliver your message. You choose the message and you choose the recipient. It might be your nearest and dearest, or maybe the butcher, builder, bank clerk or bar maid.

By putting your **attention on your intention** many behaviors simply sub-consciously fall into place.

Here’s an example for you. My wife could ask me, using exactly the same words every time, to mow the lawn. But depending not on what she says, but HOW she says it, I’ll react in a number of different ways. In any event the lawn always gets cut… by me…. but that’s **another story**…
Now then…

What’s the first job you have when you stand… or sit, before a group of people that you have get to listen to you, and then probably act on your message?

Any suggestions?

Write them below and then turn the page…
Nano Tip

List all the reasons why that last exercise might be useful and how you might use it.
A reminder of your glory days… several pages ago

Get on the good foot II

A simple yet God-like presentation skill and all yours for the price of a few pages…

What you both accessed during that previous exercise was a primal brain instinct.

As so long as you weren’t so close to each other that when your partner stepped forward you felt threatened, or that your personal space was being invaded, what usually happens is a couple of things...

When the ‘presenter who didn’t know the answer steps back; the audience immediately senses from the behavior, no matter how small a backward step is taken, that they have them ‘on the run’ so to speak. It’s a primal defence mechanism. You appear to be trying to ‘dodge the bullet’. The other thing that usually happens is that since your physicality has a definite affect on your mental state, you tend to go to defence in your tone of voice and also possibly your gestures.

Alternatively; on stepping forward, even when every primal instinct is screaming at you to get out of the way and retreat, two incredible things happen. The first is that the audience sees you stepping forward into the ‘danger zone’ and subliminally admire your courage.

Secondly, your forward motion tends to take you mentally into “explain’ or ‘engaged’ mode. So even though you don’t have an answer, you’re open and unafraid.

My first piece of advice is never ever bullshit… and that takes courage because it will mean you have to admit ‘failure’.
NB Failure in this circumstance doesn’t exist... only learning and the opportunity to recover well

**REMEMBER** it’s the quality of your recovery that’s important, not the fact that you didn’t know something...

If you don’t actually believe that last bit, you’ll never recover well... your choice.

My second piece of advice is, every time you get asked a question, whether you know the answer or not, take a single physical step into it... you’ll look and feel brilliant!
OK... Left Brain v Right Brain

Another much misused simplification of one of the universe’s most complex structures...

I’m no neuro-scientist, but this is pretty plain; some of us have a bias towards a logical, straight line or fact-seeking mode, ‘Just give me the facts”. Some are biased towards sounds, sights, smells and feelings, or top put it another way “I see, hear what you mean”, “Smells fishy to me”, “It doesn’t feel right to me”.

Any audience you work with will be a mix of all of the above. Keep this fact in mind when designing your message, and you’ll more likely keep people awake and engaged.

One useful thing to know is what your bias is.

Why do you think it might be useful to know?

Your thoughts here...
Here’s my offer…

Usually our message will be weighted towards how we like to receive information. Always keep in mind that your message isn’t for or about you, it’s about them…

So that’s about a million pages of brain research edited into four paragraphs… you can always read more if you want to, but that’s the basics of what you need to know to keep your audiences awake and engaged.

Next session:
PowerPoint - If you must…
PowerPoint Slides (PPS)

AKA The killing Fields

Most people who create presentations using PPS aren’t creating presentations at all... they’re creating handouts... or a document.
The trick is to go ahead and create your document... realize it’s a document, then edit like crazy and take out nearly all the content.

If you’re just going to be delivering content or information... why are you... or they there? Why not just send an email and suggest that people call or email you back if they have any questions?

Why are you there, standing, delivering this or any presentation?

Less is usually always more when it comes to PPS, as few words as possible on the slide, simple graphs... very simple. It’s your job to bring value by explaining the headlines, curve or bars, images or whatever.

Sound effects are also useful if used sparingly IE once or max twice during a 20 to 30 minute event. If you can’t say what you need to say in 30 mins or less, you’re probably not being clear enough about your message anyway.

Your thoughts here...
So what are you doing there, with your slides and suits and polished shoes?

In my opinion, you’re there to bring **energy and meaning** to your audience. (Much like this windmill making meaning out of wind to create the flour to make the bread)

You’re there to create **context and engagement**. You’re there because the most effective way to communicate a message is through your physical being, your eyes, your arms and hands, your smile, frown, tone, humor, sincerity, honesty, passion, volume, gestures, vocal modulation, pace… the list of what you’re capable of doing is endless.

You’re there because you’re human, and human beings respond to each other like magnets, pulling and pushing. Your job is be **conscious** of the effect you want to have; and make it happen… with a little help from this collection of hints and tips.
Speaking on Mic…

Never be held hostage by anyone who says you must present from behind a lectern. You will lose ¾ of your potential to communicate and keep people awake and engaged. Buy your own clip radio microphone and power-pack and never get stuck in one position on stage.

Lastly, check out Don McMillan on the link below. He used to be something in the corporate world, but ran off to join the ‘circus’. It’s a five-minute comedy routine based on his experience of the misuse of PowerPoint. I think it’s great, and like all good comedy, it’s based in the truth…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjcO2ExtHso

Next session:

The end is nigh…
The end is nigh…

As a final reader’s contribution, I’d like you to list all the **behaviours** and dynamics that have sent you to sleep during other peoples’ presentations…

Now to finish…
Sign this statement…

I ........................................................................................ promise never to bore my audiences ever again.

Signed ......................................................................................

When you’re ‘presenting’, you’re on show... **you are on show**... it’s you.

Yes it can be scary for some, it can be **exhilarating** for others and for you it might just be one of those 21st Century things that you have to do as part of your job.

If you do it well, it’s **commercial currency** for you. People enjoy and employ people who can engage them.

Now it’s up to you…

Bon chance

And a big hug x
It begins here...

PS If you haven’t already sussed it, this very definitely wasn’t a book...

This was a presentation.
Last things last...

If it did; how did it keep you: -

Awake

Engaged

And informed?

Space for your final contribution…
About the author…

Ants is… shall we say… over 50

He’s had a varied career spanning the hospitality industry, sales management, business journalism, drama, property development; event-management and even ‘skin work’… don’t ask.

He currently heads up a leadership development organisation called the Courageous Communication Partnership.

www.courageous-communication-partnership.com

For the last several years, he and his team have combined their life and professional experience of business, drama and psychology to create experiential real time, real world challenges that test and develop leaders’ abilities to inspire and engage teams across the globe.

His current role allows him to use everything he ever experienced and learned to create the workshops he loves to run…
It’s the best version of him he ever created!

And if you want to work with him, make sure there’s a golf course nearby.

You can reach him at

info@courageous-communication-partnership.com

You can find his websites at

http://www.courageous-communication-partnership.com

NB: Re the prize… it was just a tool to keep you awake and engaged!...

BTW… I found two!
This ends...

...Now you begin!