

# Get Started

# *Speaking*

# Guide



Written by

*Michelle*  
BARRY FRANCO

[www.michellebarryfranco.com](http://www.michellebarryfranco.com)

**Hooray for you!** I am so happy for you that you have made the decision to get out there bigger and bolder with your message. And I'm equally happy for all of the beautiful lives you will impact by spreading your message further.

Here is my very favorite thing about being a speaker:

***There is no more powerful way to make a meaningful impact for many people all at once than engaging and inspiring speaking.***

Of course, engaging speaking also magnetizes clients, attracts fans and collaborators and sets you up as a known expert in your field. These are all brilliant bonuses of making a meaningful impact on the lives of those in your audience.

The contents of this toolkit will help you begin stepping onto stages and into the front of rooms with more ease, impact and frequency.

To begin speaking effectively, you'll be well-served by having a few essential things in place:

- A clear message
- Clarity on the types of audiences you want to engage
- A website or speaker page with a few essentials on it
- Speech structure and content that *works*
- Effective use of amplifying aids
- A way for audience members to follow up with you

Great news! In the pages that follow, you'll find just what you need to fill your toolbox with all of these power tools.

## Before we go a step further...

Let's address the purple polka dot pig in the ballroom, shall we?

### Are you feeling a bit nervous about this speaking thing?

If you are feeling anxious at the thought of this whole speaking adventure, then welcome to NORMAL!

**Pretty much every single human being gets heightened energy when they are going to speak.** I've been speaking for over twenty years, have stood in front of hundreds of audiences, and I still get nervous. After a while, you can learn to rename the feelings and connect them with the successful experiences you will have under your belt.

But for now, it might just feel like anxiety.

**So, I want to give you my three favorite anxiety-easing strategies so you can call upon them whenever you might need them. Here they are:**

1. **Belly Breathing** – this one is simple yet incredibly powerful. All you do is stop, take a deep full breath and send it past your chest and into your belly. Then, once your belly is full of that breath, pushing outward even – you release all of that air through your nose. Release more breath than you took in. It will take practice doing this because many of us are chest breathers, but once you train yourself you will find yourself taking belly breaths in so many situations. As soon as you hear that you will be presenting, start practicing your belly breathing. Speaking anxiety starts early for many of us.
2. **“It's not about me”** – speaking to a group of people is an opportunity to serve. The audience gathers because they want information, inspiration and insights that you have. Remind yourself that this is not about you performing, it is about them and how you can be of service to them. This will take the attention off of you and put it on preparing for them, decreasing your anxiety and increasing the likelihood of you preparing like crazy so you are most effective for them. *Remind yourself regularly, “It's not about me. It's about them and how I can serve them.”*
3. **Happy Visuals** – picture yourself standing at the front of the room, smiling and engaging with the audience. See yourself feeling confident and at ease, sharing information freely and clearly. Repeat this visualization over and over, in between your many preparation and practice sessions. You invite yourself to have that kind of experience in real life when you do this.

This positive visualization leads to a bonus anxiety-easing strategy – the most important one there is:

## **Practice, practice, practice!**

**Nothing eases anxiety like knowing that you prepared like crazy for your presentation.**

Okay, now that we've acknowledged that pig in the center of the ballroom and given it a nice, relaxing mud bath of ease – let's move onto the details of your speaking plan.

Let's start with your clear message.

## Your Crystal Clear Core Message

At the core of every great speech is one crystal clear core message. The message drives the entire speech planning process, the decision on who to share the speech with and all of the elements of the speech content.

**Your core message is derived directly from your mission in the world, the impact you want to make.** I often call this **The Stand You Take**. While it may take a variety of forms and expressions in different speeches, it always comes back to your great work in the world – the difference you are trying to make in the lives of others.

So, first let's get that articulated. What is your mission in the world? What impact are you trying to make?

And how will this make life better for those who engage with and take action on your message?

Now turn the answers to those questions into one statement that you want to use as the core message of your next speech (and likely set of speeches). State it with confidence and clarity, beginning with:

***What I know for sure is...***

*(first half of the statement is your mission, the second half is the benefit your audience will experience – all based on your answers above)*

**Excellent! That is your working core message based on The Stand You Take with your work.**

## Finding the Right Audiences

Unless you are a New York Times bestselling author or otherwise already well known for your great work, you will probably begin by speaking for free. You will be given all kinds of advice about how and when to speak for free.

Since great speeches take a lot of time and energy to prepare, you want to be sure that you are speaking to audiences with whom you are likely to have a positive experience and make a meaningful impact – and ideally attract some paying clients, too. (Though this may or may not be something you want to actively seek in your early speaking).

When you first begin, however, don't be too picky about where you speak.

**Great speaking comes as a result of practice – lots of practice.** So, take advantage of some of these early opportunities that may not be a perfect fit to hone your skill and refine your message.

The fact is, even free speaking gigs can be difficult to get. Rightfully, groups and organizations are careful about offering the time and attention of their members. **They want to be sure that the person they bring in will provide real value and handle the powerful opportunity of the stage or front of the room with grace and thoughtfulness.**

You are most likely to get speaking opportunities through organizations and groups with which you are actively engaged. Start with a brainstorm of all of the organizations in which you are a member. Don't forget about PTA, church, non-profit organizations and boards on which you are a volunteer. Then, of course, there are your networking groups and hobby groups.

**Write out your group brainstorm here:** (don't filter! Right now, anything goes.)

Look over that list and determine which groups might be most fun for you to offer a talk. Here are some criteria to consider:

- Can I be of real service to this group with my message?**
- Are they warm and inviting, giving me the chance to test the waters safely?**
- Is my message something they will appreciate?**
- Will speaking for this group help get my name out as an expert to the right people?**
- Am I likely to get paying clients from this group?**

Think of other criteria you want to use to decide. **Please only choose a group that will help you feel good about yourself and your speaking.** The goal is to have you experience success as a speaker and feel confident about getting on more stages and in front of more rooms.

Once you have a working list of possible speaking opportunities, use the form on the next page to track the organizations to which you are going to offer talks. Make contact with those you know first, to establish a warm connection. Let them know why you are a good fit for their audience. Send them to your Speaker page or website (see page 9).

**While it can be tricky to get your first few speaking gigs, once you get a reputation for valuable presenting, you will quickly see how much a great speaker is in demand!**

## Speaking Opportunity Tracker

Target Group or Organization	Contact Name	Date of Contact	Topics offered	Notes

## A Website or Speaker Page

Before you actually pick up the phone and call your contact at the organizations you've gathered on that list, or send them an email, you want to have a place to send them to learn more about your speaking.

If you are already well known in the organization and the program decision makers are already clear on your message and your style – and impressed with both – then this may not be required. But it is *useful* even for them. And for the other groups, this resource will be essential in helping you get speaking gigs.

### Here is what you want to have on your website or speaker page:

- ❑ **Photos of you in action** – choose photos that show your facial expressions and energy so they will feel confident that you will bring liveliness to your presentation. You want them to be professional (not your water skiing photos – well, unless you are a water skiing expert, in which case those would be perfect!) but not stiff.
- ❑ **A video clip of you speaking.** (I know you may not have this, but let this be an invitation to get one as soon as possible. It really helps the organizers decide that you are a great fit if they can see you in action.)
- ❑ **A list of topics on which you can speak.** Turn your overall expertise area into a variety of speech titles that would fit with the audiences for whom you most want to speak.
- ❑ **A short bio that highlights your speaking and expert experience.** This is not the place to share everything you've ever done, but do mention any and all speaking and facilitation in your background. Volunteer experience included!
- ❑ **Testimonials from previous speaking, if you have any.** If you have spoken in any environment – a previous job, as a volunteer, in college even – then ask for written testimonials from those events. Your old boss, a colleague or a fellow participant can all give valuable feedback if you don't have testimonials from professional speaking events yet.
- ❑ **A warm written invitation paragraph for them to contact you to discuss speaking which shows genuine excitement at the opportunity.** Do not use business speak here – be conversational. They want to know you will be engaging as speaker and right now, especially if you don't have a video clip, all they've got is your writing to go on.
- ❑ **Contact info, including email and phone number.**

## A Speech Structure That Works

Without turning this into a whole course on how to create a speech (though do watch for one of those, coming soon), a few essentials will help ensure that your presentation is truly useful and memorable.

First, you need a structure that works. I'm going to give that to you on the next page. It might look familiar (high school English class, maybe?) but trust me, it's the best structure for clarity of your message, especially when you begin speaking. (After over 20 years of speaking, I still use it, though – so it'll last you forever!)

Your goal is to give them the *right* amount of information - the amount that will serve them well, that they can take in, remember and use later. **If you tell them everything you know about your topic, you'll lose them for sure!**

**So, use the structure on the following page. Really – fill it in and use it!** If you include those elements in your speech, you will be sure to establish the kind of credibility and audience focus that is required of great speaking.

## Speech Outline Framework

### Introduction

Attention grabber: (question to audience, engaging story, participatory exercise)

---

Purpose/Goal for speaking \_\_\_\_\_

Benefit to audience for listening \_\_\_\_\_

Credibility - who are you and why should I listen to you? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Preview of main points/messages

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_

Body of Your Presentation (Engaging detail and intrigue abound...)

Main point/Message 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Support a (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Support b (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Transition \_\_\_\_\_

Main point/Message 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Support a (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Support b (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_

Main point/Message 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Support a (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Support b (story, example, statistic) \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion (summarize purpose and main points)**

---

---

**Impactful close (statement, rhetorical question, quote, request)**

---

---

### Some guidelines for filling in the outline framework:

- **Before you write anything on the outline framework, do at least 10 minutes of true brainstorming** so that you are pulling from a large pool of information you could cover on your particular topic. The first three main points that come to your mind may not be the best three main points for your goal of this presentation.
- **Write your Attention Grabber last.** It should relate to everything you have in your presentation and be the very best way to magnetize their attention in a way that also meets your presentation goals.
- Your purpose for speaking = your outcome goals for this presentation.  
**What do you want from your audience?**
- The benefit to your audience is never “they will know more about [my topic.]” We are all on information overload. **Ask yourself, “How will their life be better because they listened to me today?”**
- It is perfectly okay for your transition to sound like, “Now that we’ve talked about [point one], let’s explore [point 2.]” Yes, ideally you will add some spice to this formula over time, but remember always: **Clarity over cleverness.**
- **Vary your support points between data, research findings (always cite sources for your research), and stories.** Most people need a mix of these types of information to be compelled to action. They need to care as well as “get it.”
- **Remind them as you close what you want from them.** What, precisely, are you wanting them to do, think, feel? Say it clearly. Give them tools to make it happen (a sign up form, a brochure, a website url on a business card.)
- **Close with real impact.** Make your close at least as powerful as your opening, possibly even more so, depending on your goals. Stories, rhetorical questions, shocking statistics are some ways to close with impact.

This speech framework will work whether you are speaking to inform or persuade, and even if you are simply telling about your life experience in story format. I hope you get a lot of use out of it! It’s a much-loved tool for my clients, students and workshop participants over the last many years.

## Effective Use of Amplifying Aids

Have you ever been to one of those presentations where the presenter stands at the front of the room and reads his slides to the audience? Yep, me, too. Ugh.

**The problem is, when there are words to see, it's nearly impossible not to focus on reading them – even as the presenter!** (So don't beat yourself up if you've been that presenter before.)

We all know that this isn't an effective way to captivate and engage our audience, but **we have so few examples of how to create slides – or use other visuals and alternative amplifying aids – effectively.**

Well, that's all going to change for you now! Yay!

**The most effective and efficient way for me to teach you how to use engaging amplifying aids is to show you some of my favorite examples and resources.**

Then, I'll give you a quick guide on how to create one kind of presentation slide that really will enhance your presentations. It is so easy you're going to love it!

But first, **let me point you to one of my favorite, completely unexpected and fabulous amplifying aid examples ever.** (It's also one of the best speeches I've ever seen.) [Click here to watch.](#)

**The amplifying aid shows up just after the 2:00 minute mark.** If you have time, the whole speech is worth the time tenfold in inspirational power, content and in delivery style example.

Here's an example of **a short, pack-a-punch presentation done with effective slides:** [http://www.ted.com/talks/derek\\_sivers\\_keep\\_your\\_goals\\_to\\_yourself.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_keep_your_goals_to_yourself.html)

**The key takeaway here is that the amplifying aid – slides or otherwise - should engage your audience, delight them even, and then allow the attention to get quickly and solidly back into the message - and on you as the presenter.**

*To see more great examples of image-based slides and learn a ton about how to create great ones, go check out these two sites. This is where I learned everything I know about creating presentation slides:*

[Presentationzen.com](http://Presentationzen.com)

[Duarte.com](http://Duarte.com)

Even better, buy their books [Presentation Zen](#) and [Slide:ology](#). You'll love them.

Okay – now you've got great content, including truly useful presentation enhancing amplifying aids. You've got contact lists and a proven speech structure for your content. You are ready!

**But wait!**

Before you hit those stages and rooms, you need systems in place for creating long-lasting, mutually rewarding relationships with the people in your audiences.

**You've got to make it easy for them to engage with you after your presentation.**

## Make It Easy for New Clients, Event Organizers and Fans to Connect

Yes, you want to make an immediate and meaningful impact on real lives when you speak. You will create your speech with the intention of creating value in that experience, all by itself.

**But let's face it, you can do so much more if you have more time.** If you were able to coach one-on-one with them, have them dig into your book and apply it in their own lives over time, or if they had you come in to facilitate a whole workshop – you would bring even more value!

### They should know this!

This is not about the hard sell from the stage. It's not about somehow manipulating them into buying your stuff. **This is about making it easy for them to get more help from you if it would serve them.**

Here are some ways you can make it easy for new clients, new fans and event organizers to become part of your ongoing business community and even hire you if it feels like a fit:

- **Invite them to go to your website and download your free gift.** Better yet, create a special free gift just for them and tell them where they can go to download it. Create special cards they can pick up that have the url on it. Set up an email list with an opt-in form so that when they go to your website they input their name and email to get the free gift, just like you did to get this Get Started Speaking Toolkit. Now, you can send them useful tips and continue to serve them through regular emails as well. They will also learn more about how you might help them in the future.
- **Create a fun giveaway for the event.** Maybe a pen, sticky pads or notebook with your website url and phone number on it. Make it colorful and fun – something they will enjoy using. They will think of you when they use it and be more likely to visit your website or call when they need your service.
- **Create special flyers to share that highlight the service that will most delight this audience.** Maybe you have a flyer for your custom workshops or a postcard about your coaching services. You might consider giving an event discount as well.

These are just a few ideas. **The key is to make it clear that you are here to serve and that they can engage more deeply if they'd like - always with integrity and the intention to give a complete presentation on the day of the event.** You never want them to feel "sold to" from the stage. I know you don't want them to feel that either.

### A note to close...

You were made to do great work. People are out there, waiting for your message and the uniquely-you, distinctive way you were made to help them. I want to keep telling you that over and over again because I mean it with all my heart.

I am thrilled that you are ready to spread your message further and wider by speaking to groups. The more people you can help, the better!

If I can be of service to you in any way, please let me know. You will find many [articles on my blog](#) to help you craft a room-moving presentation. I have some cool [free resources on my website](#) – please take a look around.

My book, ***Soul Power to Your Message: The Presentation Skills Guide to Making a Real Impact with Your Life-changing Message***, [is available on Amazon.com](#). That's a very low-cost way to get some very direct, step-by-step guidance on creating your speeches. I'm very proud of that book and I know you would find it immensely useful.

My most recent book, [Beyond Applause: Make a Meaningful Difference Through Transformational Speaking](#) is an excellent guide for how to move from speaker to leadership through your speaking. These two books together are a powerful combo!

I'm over here cheering you and your beautiful message on with great love and enthusiasm! Let me know how I can help. You are now in the loop of upcoming programs and services so watch your inbox for exciting new ways we can support you and your leadership in our world.

My best to you always,



Michelle Barry Franco  
Speaking & Message Coach, Workshop & Training Facilitator  
[www.michellebarryfranco.com](http://www.michellebarryfranco.com)