

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Michelle Barry Franco

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

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You are listening to the *Beyond Applause* podcast episode number eight.

Welcome to *Beyond Applause*, a podcast for mission-driven leaders, coaches, and creatives who are ready to share their expertise and stories through public speaking. Here's your host, Michelle Barry Franco.

Hello, hello, my speaker friends. We have a delightful topic today. You know, the difference between a useful and very good talk, and one that is jaw-dropping that makes your audience members want to go tell all their friends about it is this juicy little element. And it's an element that is so rarely directly addressed and intentionally created within a talk. But not anymore, not by you.

We're going to talk about delight. How do you delight your audience when you speak? I cannot wait to dive into this topic with you because I know that when you start to consciously think about how you can delight your audience, you're also going to delight yourself along the way. And your talks are going to be so much more captivating and exciting for your audience as well as you.

First, I had a listener ask me a question the other day and this is a listener who also follows a lot of other things that I write and post and social media, all of that, and she said to me, "Okay, I just got to know, how do you do things like the podcast and videos and all of the things that you do where there aren't live people in front of you? How do you do those without feeling like you're just talking to yourself?"

And I do get asked this question a lot because I do a lot of video. I do Facebook lives and I do videos instead of blogging because frankly, video is easier for me to create than writing is, generally speaking. But here's the thing, and I think this is really the crux of it for me because I did need to step back and ask myself, how do I do that? Well, first of all, hundreds and hundreds, it's probably thousands and thousands of video takes way back when we didn't do things like Facebook lives, when I think the expectations around video were a lot higher, around perfection - actually, I'm not even sure that's true. But I certainly had much higher expectations around

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

perfection way back in 2008 or 2009 or 2010 or whenever I first started doing the video elements.

But here's where I am now with it, and I really need to say both of those because you know, now is 10 years later, right? So we have to recognize that, that I have thousands and thousands of hours for sure in practicing, and you know, just like, retaking video. So some of it is just kind of the process of getting used to using a new medium, and that's the same with podcasting, right? I'm sitting, just sitting here with my microphone and one could easily feel like they were talking to themselves. And I do have a lot of practice talking to myself.

However, it does not feel to me like I'm talking to myself at all. It feels like I'm talking to you. And I think that's really the only other piece of advice that I can give around this and this is what I said to this person who had asked me the question. I said, you know, first of all, it's many, many hours of getting used to it. I think there are shortcuts to that. I don't think you have to do bazillions of hours that I had to around trying to be perfect. Go ahead and skip that part.

But you are going to have a period of time where you're just getting used to the new medium, right? So that's cool. That's going to be part of it. But the other part is really intimate and rich connection with your audience. So I just want to put that out there. When I'm speaking into this microphone and I realize that, you know, in the "real world" of time and space, we're not both in the same place together, although right this minute, it feels to me like we are. I see you, I hear you, I know what you're wondering and thinking, or at least in general I do. And my heart is connected to that and wanting to serve that.

So that's my answer to that question for that person and I thought it would be helpful to share it with you as well in case you're carrying it. Since of course, as a thought leader, yes, we talk a lot about being on the stage, but there are so many ways that we share our message to make a difference in the world through thought leadership. And podcasting is absolutely one of them.

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

Okay, so Story of Inspiration. I want to tell you about my client and friend, Lane. So Lane came up to me after a talk he recently gave, and he had been on my webinar that I delivered a couple of months ago and you know, had been very excited about some of the things he had learned. Lane's been speaking for many years. He's a very good speaker, he's absolutely an expert in his area of expertise. And he speaks, you know, in a variety of places and has lots and lots over the years.

But after our sessions, we had a coaching session as well. He was on the webinar, he's been reading my materials and all of that, and you know, following the videos and that kind of thing. But what Lane said to me I wanted to share with you in case you haven't implemented on this part yet. He said, "It changed everything when I focused so fully and completely on my audience, who they are, and what they would really like to hear, what would serve them." And I'll leave an ad for today's theme. What would delight them? And then shared stories. Used stories as a way to really make that connection.

He said, "I could not believe the response. I had so many" - you know, he had so many people coming up afterward saying that they wanted him to come speak at future events they had coming up, who would love to talk to him about doing workshops for their organization, which is a big part of what Lane does in the world. So it was just, I think, such a beautiful story of inspiration.

Here is a very experienced and excellent speaker who has been running his successful business for a long time, who with this one tweak, really had a remarkable experience. You should have seen him. He was beaming. We actually live in the same town and our kids go to the same school. Our daughters are very good friends and so he came up to me at our country fair and was just glowing. It was so delightful.

That can be you too. It's just tweaks, right? You can be a really good speaker and still make this one small shift around delight - I'll say especially since that's our topic today, and dramatically impact the outcomes of your speaking. So let Lane be your inspiration.

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

Alright, let's talk about how to delight your audience when you speak. So it's hard not to think of Oprah and Ellen when I think about delighting your audience, right? They both have these incredible audience experiences when they first open their shows, especially, right? There's Ellen doing her little dance moves, I love it.

You know, dancing down the aisles and the audiences weigh into it, and I realize that there's probably some coaching of the audience around how to respond to things. Nonetheless, it is so clear that there is a whole lot of delight for Ellen, for her guests, and for her audience when she's doing her show. Same thing with Oprah. And of course, we can't ignore the fact that they're able to give large sum gift certificates for shopping sprees and that kind of thing but think about it.

Even when they're just having conversations or Ellen is facilitating a game or just having a conversation with one of the celebrities about an upcoming movie, how many times you just can't help but laugh. It's so wonderfully delightful. So we can absolutely use them as inspiration.

But we aren't Oprah or Ellen, alas. For many of us, the \$250 gift certificate for each member of our audience would pretty much clean us out. Or maybe that's just me. Though I would just like to make a note here. Oprah and Ellen, if you're listening, I'd be happy to gift your audience my book if you'd like to have me come pay a visit. Just a little side note. I'm sure many people who are listening to this podcast would do the same as well. So if you reach out, we can hook you up.

So we can take a page from the Ellen and Oprah book, however, even in our speaking and maybe even to much smaller audiences, although you may have very large audiences as well. I want to use the example of Katherine Center, who was one of the presenters at TEDxBend just this year, 2018. And we'll put a link to her talk in the show notes, but she started at her talk by admitting to writing fan fiction about Duran Duran, and she invited each of us to get into and really imagine this character, this sixth-grade girl, and she describes her in great detail with her braces and

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

her acne and really takes us into the visual world of this sixth grader. Really the sixth grader looking in the mirror is what it felt like.

And really kind of takes us in far enough so that we feel compassion and kind of a lot of identification. There was detail, enough detail that even if we didn't have all of those details, we remember that phase, right? And we can also feel some compassion because many of the people in her audience, in this TEDx audience have kids that are that age or have had kids that age who are now older.

So she took us into her own world as a sixth grade, in desperate love with Duran Duran. We laughed, we belly laughed through the whole introduction. And I was sitting behind my three daughters who are in eighth, sixth, and fifth grades, and they were laughing too. So while yes, I knew that I could identify sort of like, with the distance, and I thought, you know, one could think that that description would only resonate if you have enough space from it, there are my daughters, spanning those years and really getting it, where she's going with this.

So what a delightful start to a talk that continued to just not disappoint. And you can see that when you watch her TEDx talk. But she also convinced all of us to advocate for more youth fiction book with female protagonists to share with the boys in our lives. So while it was a hilarious talk, she had a serious and meaningful mission and it was such a compelling combination.

Her talk has stayed with me in all the months since, and that was - I don't know, was it back in March? And now we're in June. And so of course, you know, it comes up in my mind regularly as I look at books for my daughters. My daughters are voracious readers and I'm often sort of checking out what's the latest when my daughters and I are talking about the books that they're reading. We have this new lens, this new element to always be considering.

So what does it take to delight your audience? And you know, we'll use Katherine's talk in some places so that you can see this in real live action. First of all, you must be deeply connected with your audience to know what

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

will delight them. What will delight one audience is not the same as what will delight another.

And this makes me think of this talk that I like to show in some of my corporate trainings when I do corporate trainings. It's a really short six-minute talk where Derek Sivers - I hope that's how you say his name - basically argues you should not share your goals, that in fact when you say your goals out loud, your brain feels like you've accomplished them and starts celebrating and you don't have motivation.

Anyway, as part of the talk, he has a slide that has a picture of a treadmill on it with all these clothes hanging on it. And so I show this talk in a low - I've shown it in many, many different trainings of adults, professional adults generally speaking, I've also showed it in many college classrooms. I'll tell you, the training rooms inside of companies get an even bigger laugh and it makes sense to me because when you do an audience analysis and you think about what really delights these audiences, there are a lot of people in these corporate audiences who have had big visions for how they are going to exercise from here forward every day on this new beautiful treadmill that they've purchased and put in their extra bedroom or their master bedroom, and instead end up hanging clothes on them.

So there's a lot of resonance and it makes everybody in the room laugh. It's delightful, right? So in order to know what would delight them, he had to know who this audience was. Oh, this audience will get it when I show this picture about what happens to our motivation. So we have to have an intimate connection with our audience in order to know what will delight them. What is their world like right now? What are their current struggles? Especially as those struggles relate to your topic area. And what would help them see that you get them, that you are like them in some meaningful ways?

So these are the kind of questions you want to ask yourself so that you have that kind of connection. I mean like, who wasn't in love with Duran Duran? In my generation. Actually, I wasn't really in love with Duran Duran, but I had friends who were. I was in love with other - you know, the

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

Scorpions and Van Halen. Like, we have our people, right? So even when you share that kind of detail, it is the passionate love for a rock band when you're a teenager that the audience is relating to.

So second, you need to decide that you do not only want to persuade, motivate, engage, but that you want to light up their worlds, that you really want to delight them. So first, you got to get to know them. You know, get connected with them, and then just make the decision. I want to delight this audience. I don't want to just serve them. I want to light them up.

And that opens up this like - it's like unlocking a door. It's the key to unlock a door to all kinds of like, sparkly beauty for your talk. Can you see how this is a level or three up from just keeping their attention? So to keep our attention, Katherine Center, in her talk could have used book examples that are familiar, and she did, like Harry Potter. She could have used things like *The Grapes of Wrath*, classics, those kinds of things, and that would keep our attention. It's like, "Oh yeah, I know that. Oh yeah, I get that."

To engage and motivate us, she could have a clear call to action, which she did. Her call to action was share these female protagonist books with the boys in your life. But delight is a whole new level. It's got bravery and courage. It's got surprise from the unexpected. It's got rich detail in places we haven't considered for a long time, just for the purpose of delight. And this is like, her describing herself in sixth grade. And when you listen to that, you can hear what I mean.

She didn't have to do that, right? She didn't have to do that. But those are the ways that we get delighted. We get delighted with beautiful language, unexpected analogies, a quick little vignette story that takes us into a whole 'other world with vivid color quickly, right? Because when we're listening to a talk, we want it to feel a bit like a journey. And delight is like this big spark and then we come back to sort of a place of normalcy of listening and learning. And then another spark.

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

This is what helps keep us. We can't just be like, up at this level of delight the whole time because it'll exhaust us, right? So you sprinkle it in there like fairy dust, like high impact fairy dust.

So number three. You must go all in. So you made the decision, that's the second thing you've done. You've said, I am going to delight them. Number three, you are going to go all in. Delight is a mutual experience, so really I'm thinking a lot about delivery of the delight here. So when you are delighted, your delight feeds and inspires their delight.

So watch Ellen give away those gifts. Look at her face when that special audience member gets the new car. She is at least as delighted as that winner. This reminds me of watching like, a live concert. Like, tears streaming down my face just feeling into the delight of the singer. You can ask my husband. I often will like, just almost like I'm being pulled magnetically, I will find my way to the closest position with the greatest view of the singer's face because I want to watch them be so into it. There's just something about that that really captivates us. There's this transmission that happens almost.

So go all in in your own delight. Make sure that you are delighted by what you're sharing, and part of that happens because you've done a great audience analysis. You've made the decision to commit to delight, and then you've just sort of like, surrendered to delivering that delight. When you tell that story, move your body all around. Contort it in whatever way you need to to show them what was happening in that scene.

Be courageous with your language and your voice fluctuation, all of it. Give it your all. That is so delightful to your audience. Katherine Center loves her message, so when you listen to her talk, when you watch her talk, you'll see that. You can feel it when she's delivering it.

So what do you need to do to be delighted by your own content and delivery? Do that. So it's the lit up faces, or if you're speaking virtually, it might be the passionate emails you receive that make speaking such a wonderful way to serve in the world. Honestly, it's my favorite part.

[Beyond Applause](#) with Michelle Barry Franco

Ep #8: How to Delight Your Audience

For me, it's worth it just for that experience of seeing that delight arise in their faces. So ask yourself, how can I delight this audience today? After you've created your talk, you know, make sure that it's useful, of course, make sure that you are delivering on the promise you made in your title and in your summary, in your marketing materials for this talk or whatever it is, whatever piece of content you're sharing. But then ask yourself the question, how can I delight this audience? Then do that thing.

It's ridiculous fun for me to get to be here with you every single week. Thank you for showing up. If you're ready to delight as many audiences as you can and you want to know how to get started on reaching further and wider, just go to michellebarryfranco.com/start and you can get my Get Started Speaking guide. It is a full, content rich guide that'll really take you through pretty much everything you need to know to get started or really step into the next level of making speaking and making a difference as a speaker a big part of your work in the world.

So that's all for this week, my speaker friends. I already can't wait for next week. Meantime, never forget, you were made for this. They're waiting for you. Go change some lives.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Beyond Applause*. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more, head on over to michellebarryfranco.com/start to get your free complete guide to stepping into leadership speaking right away.