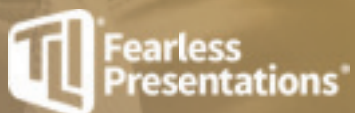




# FEARLESS PRESENTATIONS<sup>®</sup>

MINI COURSE

10 Deadly Sins That Turn Off Audiences



## INTRODUCTION

“People learn faster  
when they’re  
having fun.”

### TERMS

**Presentation-** a speech or talk in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience.

### Introduction

Want to know what not to do during a presentation? (I know it isn't grammatically correct, but that is what people are typing into search engines.) Well, below are 10 of the biggest public speaking mistakes that presenters make.

This is a list of what we call the 10 deadly sins that turn off audiences. Use it as a checklist for yourself. If you find that you sometimes do one or two of these items, then the list will help you identify what to work on.

If you find that a few of these are common, then, just know, that we help participants solve ALL of these 10 things in our Fearless Presentations ® class. Follow the link for details about classes coming up in your area.

## **1. Data-Dumping. Too much information or too many slides and/or bullet points.**

The biggest (worst) thing that a speaker can do is to Data Dump. This is where the speaker gives endless bullet points and endless slides with way too much data for a single sitting. As speakers, we often feel like, if we don't tell the audience everything, we have failed as a presenter. In reality, though, that is really unrealistic. For instance, I have been teaching presentation skills classes for over 20 years.

If I tried to explain to the audience EVERYTHING that I know about the topic in a single one-hour presentation, it would be disastrous. Instead, I would do much better to focus on just a few key items that will be most helpful to that audience, right now.

A few items covered really well is always better than a lot of items covered in a cursory way.

## **2. Reading a long series of bullet points to the audience with little additional information.**

This mistake often occurs when the presenter is nervous about forgetting important parts of the presentation. To reduce the nervousness, though, he/she will often add a bullet for every single data point covered in the presentation. This causes the "Read... Click... Read... Click..." method of presenting. Here is a reality check for you if you have ever used this technique...

IT DOESN'T WORK

Most speakers who do this will sound really boring. The technique also forces the presenter to cover EVERY SINGLE BULLET, no matter what. So when the speaker looks out at the audience and sees them getting droopy and drowsy, he/she will often panic. The speaker will rush through the remaining points and seem very unprofessional in the process.

Instead, limit your main bullet points to just a few, most important items. Then use attention-getting pieces of evidence like stories, examples, analogies, quotes, audience participation, props, and the like. (We cover how to add each of these in the Fearless Presentations® class by the way!)

### **3. Speaking while audience tries to read the slide.**

Coming in at #3 (and my personal pet peeve) is when a speaker provides a complicated visual aid, but then doesn't refer to it. I remember sitting through a company meeting, once, where the speaker put up a slide with 10 bullets.

Then, he just started talking. A kept looking at the slide as he spoke. I assumed that he was on bullet number four, but then he clicked to the next slide. Since he never referred to the slide, it didn't really help us understand the content. It just confused everyone.

Remember that your visual aid is there to help you explain your content.

#### 4. Poor Eye Contact

This item always comes up high in survey results. However, we actually don't see it occur much in our classes. The reason why is that if you design a good presentation, this typically fixes itself. For instance, if you are violating the top two or three of these tips, your going to be looking at your slides and your bullets (not your audience). If you focus on just a few items and use examples, stories, and analogies to reinforce each point, you will naturally make good eye contact with your audience. (This one is the easiest one to fix!)

#### 5. Repetitious or predictable gestures.

I had a Business Law professor in college who I absolutely loved. He had phenomenal stories that kept us all entertained. However, he had one, very noticeable habit that was actually pretty funny. Whenever he got a question from the audience that made him have to think a little, he would walk to the left part of the stage, pull Chapstick out of his pocket, and lather on the lip balm as he answered the question. It became so predictable, that, as the semester progressed, a few of the students were constantly asking him questions just to see how many times he would apply the balm in a single class.

My professor had gestures and movements that were predicable. As a result, these actions became a distraction.

Although we don't do a tremendous amount of video recording in our presentation classes, we do a little. These short video sessions are essential to determine what our predictable gestures and habits are. Once we know about them, we can work on eliminating them.

## 6. Low energy delivery.

Although this isn't #1 on our list, in my opinion, I believe it is the most destructive to a presenter. Energy and enthusiasm is the absolute, most sought after trait in a speaker. If you have low energy, your audience will see you as being boring. You will constantly see people on their phones or glancing down at their notes. Most often, people do this to hide their drowsiness.

A church I used to attend was led by a fantastic pastor who led very detailed studies. His style, however, was very low energy and lots of detail. Anytime I felt my eyes getting heavy, I'd quickly look down at my Bible. I was afraid that if I kept looking at the pastor, I'd fall dead asleep. Please don't put your audience through this! Your audience will never have any more enthusiastic about your topic that you do. Kick up the energy a little, and your audience will love you. (For more details, view [Enthusiasm: The Secret to Great Presentations](#).)

## 7. Shop-talk. Industry specific terms or complicated verbiage when simple will do.

We all have internal acronyms that will make absolutely no sense to people outside our organizations. Be careful not to insert these into your presentations. Even in my company, internally, we get tired of saying Fearless Presentations class over and over. So, when we are talking to each other, we just say, the FP class. If I'm giving a presentation, though, and I use this acronym, I will confuse a lot of people. So, be careful about your industry semantics.

The biggest challenge with this, however, happens because of insecurity. When a speaker is going to be delivering a presentation to an audience who he/she sees as being highly educated or more successful, the speaker will often fill the presentation with, what I call, "Harvard Words." They will start to say things like...

Diminishing Social Anxiety while Disseminating Knowledge to Vast Audiences of Information Gatherers.

They this complicated verbiage, because they want to appear educated in front of the group. In reality, though, they sound confusing. Instead, just use plain, everyday language. (By the way, if you haven't figured it out yet, the phrase above is just a complicated way to say Fearless Presentations.

### **8. Monotone voice.**

**Or a narrowly ranged voice shows lack of emotional interest in the subject.**

The monotone voice is just an offset of the low energy speaker above. This version, however, often occurs when the speaker is reading a speech or delivering a memorized speech. Avoid doing these things and kick your energy up, and you will stop this symptom very easily.

### **9. Useless words.**

**Too many filler words or sounds that make the speaker sound unsure of his/her content.**

Fillers occur when we get nervous. The more nervous the speaker, the more fillers. We have found that people who attend our classes reduce their fillers pretty dramatically automatically because we help them increase their confidence. So, if you find that you are using a high concentration of ers, um, and you know, come to one of our classes, and we will help you eliminate this challenge very quickly. (For more details, visit [How to Eliminate Ers, Uhms, and Other Fillers in Your Speeches.](#))

### **10. Going overtime without consent**

There are very few things more disrespectful to an audience than going overtime. For instance, let's say that you are at a conference and the schedule says that lunch will be at Noon. The speaker, right before lunch, though, is a little long-winded. At exactly 11:50 AM, people are going to start looking at their watches. At 11:58 AM, they will start to squirm. By 12:01 PM, the speaker will start to get dirty looks. At 12:05 PM, the entire group will be lost.

One of the great things about the presentation outline that we teach in Fearless Presentations® is that it helps speakers create presentations that hit time frames EXACTLY. In fact, if the organizer came up to one of the graduates a few minutes before the speech and said, "I know we gave you 30 minutes on the agenda, but a few speakers ahead of you have gone over. Can you do your speech in 20 minutes instead?" Our graduates would look back at the organizer, smile, and say, "Piece of cake." The process allows you to adjust your content on-the-fly without reducing the retention or understanding from the audience. For details, you can view the class syllabus at [Public Speaking Class](#).

Need Help with Any of These Public Speaking Mistakes (What Not to do During a Presentation)? Obviously, we are biased, but the Fearless Presentations® class can really help people who have nervousness when they present, and as a result, they use a lot of filler words. The link to the class will show you the curriculum as well as a schedule of upcoming classes. Whether you go to our class or not, if you struggle giving presentations, a good class can really help!



